



Granaries of Ming Dynasty

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Choreographer's great debut

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Post-1980s

Generation faces a dilemma

Confucius said more than 2,000 years ago that a person in his 30s should have a career and a family. This dogmatic advice is not lost on the generation born in the 1980s, the first of whom turn 30 this year.

These adults are more confused and anxious about life than their ancestors, parents and elder siblings as they scramble to obtain the modern markers of success: a car, a home and a wife.

But what is a century-old tradition failing this generation?

CFP Photo

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To become 'world city' Beijing still has a long way to go

By Chu Meng

Beijing, with a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of about 68,200 yuan, still has a long way to go before embracing the ambitious title of "world city," Huang Yan, vice director of the Municipal Commission of Development and Reform, said Tuesday at a press conference.

Mayor Guo Jinlong announced the plan to move from "international city" to "world city" at the third session of the 13th Beijing Municipal People's Congress Monday, without

giving a specific agenda.

Huang said that the plans are still being researched, but a detailed timetable may be ready for the Twelfth Five-Year Plan. She said the government hoped to achieve the transformation by 2050.

Huang said "world city" is defined as one with a global influence in politics, economy and culture, a mature infrastructure, a good environment and with education and health care available to its residents.

"By the end of 2009, Bei-

jing's service sector accounted for 75.8 percent of its economy, the minimum level for a 'world city,'" said Zhao Hong, director of economics at Beijing Academy of Social Science.

The capital lagged far behind foreign counterparts such as New York, London and Tokyo in various aspects, he said. The international community generally regarded a world city as one with a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) exceeding \$15,000 a year (100,000 yuan).

The number of Fortune 500

headquarters is another key judge of a city. Only a handful of influential international organizations are based in Beijing: there are twice as many in Shanghai, and London alone has 57. Beijing also lacks world-renowned cultural communities and activities, and is backward in research and development of high-tech products.

Despite the deficiencies, "the time is ripe for Beijing to prepare for becoming a world city," Zhao said. "Beijing did very well while in weathering the global

economic recession in 2007 and 2008, and stayed ahead in economic growth in 2009."

According to the 2009 Quality of Living Survey Global conducted by Mercer, a US-based private survey organization, Singapore has the world's best infrastructure. London ranked eighth. Beijing ranked 113th, though it ranked 116 in 2008. Vienna scored highest for overall quality of living, while the US cities of Washington and New York hovered at 24th and 32nd place.

City to shutter lower liaison offices, end corruption

By Han Manman

A new plan to shut down thousands of liaison offices set up by local governments in Beijing to crack down on corruption has triggered mixed reactions.

Those targeted are offices set up by county-level administrative bodies, such as counties, county-level cities and districts, *Outlook Weekly* reported.

But liaison offices of provincial-level governments or agencies will remain. Offices of city-level administrative bodies will be re-evaluated and may be approved by upper-level government, the report said.

Targeted offices, including Inner Mongolia's Chifeng and Baotou offices and Anhui's Chizhou office, said Wednesday they had not been notified of the plans.

The liaison offices, established to "smooth communication between local and central government," were formed when market economy reforms began in the 1980s.

The offices serve as bases for local officials to lobby the central government for financial grants and preferential policies.

There are 52 semi-provincial offices, 520 city-level offices and more than 10,000 county-level and enterprise offices, according to estimates.

Experts said such offices have strengthened cooperation between Beijing and outer regions, but many of them have shady functions and inadequate supervision.

"A lot of county-level liaison offices have become reception centers for local officials who come to Beijing," said Gong Weibin, a professor from the Chinese Academy of Governance.

"Actually, some county-level governments rarely need to contact central ministries, so it's reasonable to close their offices," Gong said.

However, he said the decision could be difficult to implement



Thousands of liaison offices will be closed within six months.

IC Photo

as too many special interests are involved, and because a few of the offices serve a purpose.

Gong's words resonated in Jia Shixiong, director of the office of Zhungeer County, Inner Mongolia.

"I heard the news. But the government cannot remove offices across-the-board. Liaison offices exist for a reason. Sometimes our local government needs us to coordinate with the central government on construction projects, investments and promotions," Jia said.

Zhang Peng, who works at the Beijing office of a Jiangsu Province city government, said many offices will change their names to skirt closure.

The offices today have developed into a large industry of hotels and restaurants spending billions of yuan to employ

numerous people.

Much of that money is spent lobbying or pampering visiting local officials and office directors.

A scandal involving two offices last year sparked outrage. The Beijing offices of Xuchang and Luohe cities of Henan Province spent 660,000 yuan on 777 bottles of expensive liquor to entertain high officials.

It was one in a string of scandals surrounding the offices, many of which have been charged with bribery and embezzlement.

Gong said that dismissing the offices will be a temporary solution, as "the reasons they were created in the first place remain unsolved."

"The main problem with these liaison offices is not the number of them but their chaotic management and lax supervision by central authorities," Gong said.

Parking fee in business centers hikes

By Chu Meng

With 4 million cars on the road, the city is raising parking fees on spots located in central urban areas, authorities announced at the 13th Beijing Municipal People's Congress Monday.

Business centers like Financial Avenue, CBD and Zhongguancun, as well as areas near railway stations, hospitals, schools and shopping malls, will see the steepest increases, Huang Wei, vice mayor of Beijing, said at a press conference Tuesday.

Detailed changes in the regulations will be released in March, he said.

Parking charges are a key way for cities to control traffic. In Hong Kong, the average cost is 50 yuan per hour, in Tokyo it is 80 yuan. Beijing charges 4 to 10 yuan per hour.

The plan is expected to curb personal car use in the city proper while making cars more practical in the suburbs.

The parking fees in urban areas will be more expensive than in suburban areas; ground parking will be more expensive than underground parking, and day parking will be more expensive than night parking. Roadside parking costs will be raised from 2.50 yuan per half hour to 10 yuan, and underground parking will be six yuan per half hour.

"It will minimize parking time on the roadsides and return the lanes to other vehicles rather than parked cars," Huang said.

Liu Xiaoming, spokesman for the Municipal Committee of Transport, said Beijing's urban roads account for 17 percent of the city's total area, much less than Tokyo, Paris and New York, where roadways make up 25 percent of the space. Cars using the roads as a parking lot clutter and congest an already bad situation, he said.

"The regulation is under discussion. We will take affordability into consideration. We are considering adopting a progressive bracket, where each time you park your car it gradually will get more expensive," said Liu.

He said the government will build more public parking structures near the railway stations, the airport, hospitals and shopping areas. "In February, an eight-story parking structure will be built in Fangzhuang in south Beijing with initial government support."

The current car ban, which bans vehicles with certain license plate numbers from city streets on specific days, will continue until the majority of commuters choose public transit, Guo Jinlong, Beijing's mayor, said in his working report Monday.



Beijing's roadside parking, 2.50 yuan per half hour, may be the cheapest among the world's metropolitan cities. The price will be hiked after Spring Festival.

CFP Photo

Migrants seek wives in Vietnam



Hong Lin hopes to find a romantic partner in Vietnam.

Photo provided by Ran Wen

By Li Zhixin

Finding someone to love is tough in the big city: it is tougher when you are a migrant worker.

Hong Lin, 22, headed for Vietnam.

Hong, a migrant worker from Chongqing who was hired to do Beijing construction last year, was inspired by a news story about another Chongqing cook who worked in Ho Chi Minh City and brought home a Vietnamese bride.

He quit his job at the beginning of the year, returned home and applied for a passport. "I will go to Vietnam next month once I get a visa and a translator," he said.

Hong became a migrant worker when he was 17 years old, and he has worked in Beijing, Guangzhou and Qingdao without a chance to find love – women are oddly underrepresented on construction sites.

He went to several of the dating fairs for migrant workers, but was disappointed when women never showed up.

In order to find a partner, he once quit his job at a bicycle factory and started working at an electronic equipment factory

known for employing women. "As soon as they knew I was a migrant worker, they wanted nothing to do with me," he said. "My relatives introduced women to me several times, but they claimed to have boyfriends when they found out what I did for a living."

He said media reports say Vietnamese women are gentle, sincere and virtuous, so he intends to try his luck there. "I have already saved 10,000 yuan. I think it will be enough to prepare for my wedding. I want to get married and start a family in my hometown," he said.

Hong's fellow workers were supportive. "If he managed to bring home a wife, then maybe we should follow his lead," Song Yong, 26, one of Hong's friends, said.

"The love and marriage problem for migrant workers is an important issue facing society," said Wang Xinmei, a researcher at the Institute of Population and Labor Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

"Migrant workers have a very limited social circle. They usually meet the opposite sex through friends, marriage agencies or by



Many marriage agencies are offering to hook up Chinese men and Vietnamese women.

IC Photo

chance: all the options have abysmal success rates."

The new generation of migrant workers is at the age for marriage. According to census data from the All-China Federation of Trade Unions in 2008, most migrant workers are 16 to 30 years old: 23 percent of the workers are between the ages of 31 and 40. Most work in construction or manufacturing, a few are employed in restaurant, wholesale or retail work.

Occupational restrictions and

low income make it hard to find a partner. "[As many as] 80 percent of all construction workers are migrants. The job sites are dusty and hard, with low pay and high risk. It's not the life women are looking for," Wang said.

Women working in clothing factories or as spinners don't have it any easier. "Most women migrant workers are not looking for a migrant as a mate. They want a man who grew up in the city," she said.

NGOs register without government supervision in Shenzhen

By Chu Meng

Nongovernment organizations (NGOs) in Shenzhen can register with the Bureau of Civil Affairs without needing a supervising governmental agency. It is the mainland's first path to allowing grassroots organizations the legal status needed to receive foreign donations, authorities in Shenzhen said Monday.

Under the Social Organizations Registration and Administration Act, NGOs have to acquire official documents and get a stamp from a supervising government agency. If the organization cannot meet the requirements,

it would not be legally able to accept donations.

"Starting February, NGO founders in Shenzhen need not find a relative government agency to take responsibility for its supervision. It can directly register to and be administered by the Bureau of Civil Affairs," said Ma Hong, director of the Social Organization Administration Office under the Bureau of Civil Affairs.

The only requirements are that the NGO have a regular business location, full-time staff members and 30,000 yuan in registration capital.

"For quite a long time getting

the 'stamp' from a supervising body was the biggest bottleneck for grassroots organizations," Xu Jingan, ex-director of Shenzhen Municipal Commission for Economic System Reform, said.

He said he wanted to open a professional organization to help people with their mental health for years. "Data showed China has about 100 million people with psychological disorders. About 2,000 people commit suicide every year, and that number has grown tenfold in the last 10 years," he said.

But from 2000 till 2009, no government agency would share

responsibility with Xu. On January 17, his center opened in Shenzhen as the first "direct-registration" NGO.

The requirement that NGOs be co-administered by a civil affairs government office is a requirement unique to China. But few public administration offices are interested in bearing the responsibility, making NGO registration effectively impossible.

There are many grassroots NGOs on the mainland, and most of them are unregistered. A few are registered as business organizations: fewer are registered as a civil affairs office.

Spring Festival Gala for migrants to be filmed

By Liang Mielan

The first national Spring Festival Gala for migrant workers starts recording on February 7. It will be broadcast by CCTV7 on February 18, the fifth day of the new lunar year. The theme of the gala is "Go home and celebrate Spring Festival," and the acts are now being rehearsed.

Gathering to watch the CCTV1 Spring Festival Gala on the eve of Chinese New Year's is a family tradition. This Spring Festival, over 20 million migrant workers will have their own program.

The gala was initiated by Yangguangdadao, a program on CCTV7, and it has already been given the green light by related government bodies.

"As a national TV channel focused on rural life, we feel obligated to offer a meaningful gift to migrant workers to express gratitude for their hard work during the past year," said one of the show's developers.

"The gala is a stage for migrant workers to tell their stories and show what they have done for social progress and national development," Li Xiaomei, executive director of the gala, said.

The gala is divided into three parts, Luo Qing, the media coordinator, said. "The performances section will invite some well-known migrant worker singers and artists to perform on stage. Ordinary migrant workers are also invited to sing along, she said. "Migrant workers on the Internet have been enthusiastic about the chance, and have sent in their clips to apply," she said.

Another part of the gala will be a news review. "Several outstanding migrant workers whose stories were reported in 2009 will be invited to speak. Li Ying, the sanitation worker from Jiangsu Province who got a Shanghai hukou cleaning toilets for 10 years, will be one speaker," Luo said.

The gala will also be the format of a charity project called One, Ten, Hundred, Thousand.

"[It] is a joint effort by media and enterprises to help migrant workers improve their lives," Luo said. The project intends to send one student from a migrant worker family to study abroad, to reunite 10 couples, offer basic services to 100 workers and provide financial aid for the education of 1,000 of their children.

The project is expected to be completed by the end of the year with donations and assistance from its sponsors.

Substitute teachers left in the cold by system

By Li Zhixin

The Ministry of Education halted recruitment of new substitute teachers and told local government to pay its laid-off substitutes last Thursday. The move brought an extra chill to a winter punctuated by record lows. And only weeks before Spring Festival.

Laid-off substitute teachers are now weighing their options for employment in a new decade. But the uneven development between the country's east and west limits the options for many.

Seeking new opportunities

One of Xinhua News Agency's first reports of 2010 was of substitute teachers in Gansu Province being fired and paid a severance package of only 600 yuan.

"Compared to those teachers in remote and mountainous areas, we are lucky," Zhang Han, 56, a substitute teacher in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, said when he heard the news. "I was paid more than 100,000 yuan by the government, and that money was already in my bank account last September," he said.

Zhang taught Chinese at Shuanggang Primary School for 21 years before getting sacked last July when the government began checking teachers' credentials. He has been searching for a new job since then, but with no success. He said he will return to his hometown in Anhui Province to open a small business after the new lunar year.

Tan Qin, 53, was dropped from Bailiao Primary School in Dongguan last October. He had taught math there for 18 years and was paid 80,000 as compensation. "I am old and don't know what else I can do besides teaching," he said. Now he is working as a private tutor for several families, but it is an unstable solution.

His friend Huang Qishan, 51, was also laid off. Tan leased a house to open a continuing education class for the children of migrant workers. "My friends and some acquaintances helped introduce me to some parents whose children need make-up lessons after school. Although the pay is low, it's enough for me to get by," he said. The business brings in less than 2,000 yuan per month.

Tan said he may join Huang's school as a teacher if business grows.

Laid-off substitute teachers have many choices in Dongguan because the area has many private schools and training organizations. "Half the schools in Dongguan are private. So as long as you have ability and experience, it's not difficult to be a teacher again. Most private schools just look at your ability; they don't care if you used to be a substitute," Liang Zhen, 46, said.

Liang attended a recruitment meeting for a private school in the city and has been teaching math since last November. "Actually dozens of laid-off teachers have been employed by noted private schools."



The more remote and poor the region, the fewer accredited teachers it can draw.

For many teachers, this graduation will be a final farewell.

CFP Photos

Life harder in the west

Things are not so cheery for teachers in the remote and mountain west.

Wang Anzhi, 54, a villager from Heiyong, Weiyan County, Gansu Province, taught local elementary school students beginning in 1974. He was laid off in September and left with only 600 yuan.

He said he has taught three generations of students, and he is dependent on his career. Today he can only stay at home.

Unemployment makes life hard in his poor mountain village.

He is handicapped and cannot do farm work. His wife bears the burden of managing their few acres of crops. He cares for a 75-year-old father who is blind from cataracts.

Although his two sons work in a nearby city and send money home, that income is not enough to pay off Wang's 50,000-yuan debt to his neighbors and relatives.

Zhang Yonghong, 42, also from Gansu Province, said the most embarrassing thing is having to pick up his severance check. While normal teachers

went to collect their regular pay of 2,000 yuan, the office was calling Zhang to pick up his final paycheck of 300 yuan.

"I didn't even go to collect the money until people from the accounting department started coming after me," he said.

He and his brother plant herbs to support the family, but he hopes to teach again. "The teachers who are actually certified will never come all the way out here. I hope the school will take me back. I think the children need me. I need them, too," he said.

Bad end to a good program

The ministry announced in March 2006 that it would begin eliminating the country's 448,000 substitute teachers. But there were still 311,000 substitutes employed at the public primary and secondary school levels at the end of 2008.

Local government has been grappling with the issue for years. In August, 2007, Chongqing municipality made 8,000 substitute teachers full-time teachers and increased their pay. In Yunnan Province, the government decided to dismiss all substitute teachers under 30 years of age, retrain those between the ages of 30 and 50 and force all

over 50 to retire. In Shenzhen, the government is trying to help its army of substitutes to pass certification.

"Substitute teachers may be experienced, but their skills are a crapshoot. They have to cover too many subjects and work second jobs to get by," said Zhao Dan, an education researcher at Central China Normal University.

Most substitute teachers are old and poorly educated: few attended training. More than 90 percent of the substitute teachers are working in their own villages, and many have never seen the outside world.

Isolation makes their knowl-

edge limited and outdated. It also makes training impossible.

"The training fee for primary and middle school teachers is about 1,000 yuan, but most county governments won't pay it," she said.

Pang Lijuan, director of Beijing Normal University Education Research Center, warns that the teachers may feel abandoned by society. "Governments at all levels should recognize the value of substitute teachers and the great contributions they have made to China's education system," she said.

Pang called for improved pay and retraining.

Substitutes in history

In the past, China was in want of teachers. It was common in rural areas for high school graduates, or even junior high graduates, to find work as a substitute teacher.

The government has been trying to replace substitutes with qualified teachers for the last few years, and those efforts have marooned thousands of people who devoted their lives to education outside the employment system.

In many areas, harsh conditions and low pay keep college graduates from seeking work. The more remote and poor the region, the more its education system has been dominated by substitutes. Substitute teachers worked just as hard and were just as devoted to education as their professional peers.

That devotion was never reflected by their pay.

But in 2001, the State Council decided to "dismiss everyone without teaching qualifications and gradually retire substitute teachers." In 2005 Zhang Xinsong, vice minister of education, reaffirmed the country's commitment to break ties with the past.

The number of substitute teachers fell from 1 million in 1997 to 311,000 in 2008, according to government figures. Remaining substitutes were concentrated in rural primary schools.

Search for the next Bill Gates

Forbes says the answer may lie in China

Who will succeed Microsoft founder Bill Gates as the tech tycoon? A number of young Chinese entrepreneurs seem promising candidates.



Founder of Shanda Interactive Entertainment Limited, Chen Tianqiao IC Photo

US financial magazine *Forbes* named eight people as hopefuls for "the next Bill Gates" in its January 25 issue. All were under 40 years of age, and half were Chinese nationals: Chen Tianqiao, founder of Shanda Interactive Entertainment; William Ding, founder of NetEase; and Ma Huateng and Zhang Zhidong, founders of Tencent.

Forbes said the candidates have all achieved enormous success in science and technology, but despite their current strengths, they still need time to catch up with Gates' wealth and accomplishments.

The report pointed out that Chen, CEO and president of Shanda, revealed his "great ambition with personal characteristics." Chen refused the title while accepting the *Forbes* interview. "As an entrepreneur in China, I respect Bill Gates, but I want to be China's Chen Tianqiao, not China's Bill Gates."

Perhaps it is Google's co-founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page who will surpass Gates' wealth. In March 2009, the partners were ranked 26th among the world's richest individuals with total assets of \$15.3 billion (104 billion yuan); Gates regained his title as the world's richest man with assets worth \$50 billion.

Forbes also said that even if these new technology moguls fail to equal Bill Gates, they will still leave an indelible mark on our social life, entertainment choices and activities online.

(By Huang Daohen)

Survey

Next Bill Gates could be from China or India

A sizeable number of Americans believe that the next Bill Gates will come from India or China, as the two Asian giants are fast marching ahead on the global platform, a new US survey revealed.

"When asked where the 'next Bill Gates will come from,' 40 percent of Americans predicted either India or China," said a national survey released by the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) on the side-

lines of the world's largest consumer technology tradeshow held in Las Vegas from January 6 to 9.

About 96 percent of respondents believe innovation is critical to the future success of the US as a world economic leader, but they are concerned rising federal deficit will jeopardize prosperity of future generations, the poll said.

The economic survey, conducted by Zogby International,

found that 68 percent of Americans think innovation is key to the future success of their workplaces.

After the World Economic Forum reported that the US has lost its global competitiveness ranking in 2009, while China, India and Brazil have made gains, 74 percent of Americans said it was unlikely the US would regain its footing next year.

(Agencies)

Analysis

How to be the next Bill Gates

Profit-seeking entrepreneurs could take a few tips from billionaire software-engineer-turned-philanthropist Bill Gates. Career consultants and psychologists scrutinized the peaks and valleys of Gates' 35-year career to pinpoint what factors determined his success.

Clarity of vision

They found that one of Gates' most instructive traits - his clarity of vision - has been evident since adolescence. After writing his first computer program at age 13, Gates hasn't wavered in his mission to develop cutting-edge software with the potential to change the world.

Gates' single-mindedness has led him down some risky paths. For example, when he was 20, he dropped out of Harvard to found Microsoft. And in

1998, he dared to take the stand in an antitrust lawsuit brought by the government.

But experts said it's important for aspiring business leaders considering dicey ventures to fully understand their potential ramifications. Gambling isn't for everybody, they said, and it can sink a career if backup plans aren't in place.

Critics have lambasted Gates for a management style they label as overbearing and bossy, but his harsh workplace demeanor belies another secret to his success: his unwillingness to compromise his goals.

Eye for opportunities

Gates' emotional intelligence and business savvy could only get him so far. Luck certainly was kind to him. And while that is impossible to emu-

late, he also pounced on opportunities as they came to him.

"Successful people like Gates take advantage of opportunities because they're ready for them," said Carol Vecchio, founder of the Seattle-based Centerpoint Institute for Life and Career Renewal.

The quality most essential to Gates' success, though, is what the experts call self-knowledge. Whether it was programming BASIC or managing a charitable foundation, Gates never hesitated to act in accordance with his passions. He constantly champions innovation, refusing to stop and revel in his past accomplishments. That way, he keeps himself stimulated by work that is all-consuming.

(Forbes)

Theaters must meet domestic quota

(AP) - The government is urging theater operators to make sure that at least two-thirds of the films they show are domestically made.

China remains highly protective of its film industry and permits just 20 revenue-sharing film imports each year. The restriction amounts to a limit on foreign blockbusters that are typically distributed under revenue-sharing deals.

That has not dampened the public's enthusiasm for Hollywood films. James Cameron's *Avatar* has smashed the box-office record of \$67.3 million (495 million yuan) set by 2012 in December. The disaster movie broke the previous record of *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*, which in turn surpassed in mid-2009 the 11-year-old record held by another Cameron epic, *Titanic*.

This week, the State Council website posted a statement saying theater operators should support the expansion and development of the domestic film industry and that no less than two-thirds of movies shown each year should be locally made.

Mountain renamed after Avatar

(Reuters) - A craggy peak in a scenic part of southern China has been renamed after floating mountains featured in Hollywood blockbuster *Avatar*, with the province hoping to cash in on the movie's massive success.

The Southern Sky Column in Zhangjiajie, Hunan Province, had its name changed to *Avatar Hallelujah Mountain* in a ceremony Monday, the Zhangjiajie government's website reported.

The government said the floating Hallelujah Mountains in the movie were inspired by the Southern Sky Column, as a Hollywood photographer spent time shooting there in 2008.

Woman wants Jessica Alba surgery to win back boyfriend

(AP) - A Shanghai woman is so keen to win back her ex-boyfriend that she plans to undergo plastic surgery to transform herself into his favorite actress: Hollywood star Jessica Alba.

The 21-year-old, who identified herself as Xiaoping, told the *Shanghai Daily* that she has met with doctors at a plastic surgery clinic in the city who offered to do the work for free.

"I've made my decision," the newspaper quoted her as saying. "I'm not only doing it for my ex-boyfriend, but for myself. I'm a psychologically weak person. I want to do something to challenge myself and build a strong personality."

Liu Qi, an official at the Shanghai Time Plastic Surgery Hospital, said the woman would need eyebrow lifting, eyelid reshaping and nose reconstruction to look like Alba, star of *Sin City* and *Fantastic Four*.

Xiaoping, who works for a web firm, described to the newspaper how her Alba-obsessed 28-year-old ex-boyfriend hung photos of the actress on his walls and stored a photo of her on his mobile phone.

The man demanded she copy Alba's makeup style - even when she slept - and gave her a blonde wig for Christmas, which he asked her to wear all the time.

Housing investment a bust?

Fear of housing bubble triggers investor shift

Despite a promising economic outlook, the country remains plagued by surging home prices. Though the government passed measures to curb soaring property prices and stop speculation, change will not come in the near term. Profit-seeking businessmen will not wait. Fearing a looming market bubble, they have changed their investment focus.



China saw its sharpest rise in housing prices in 18 months last December.

CFP Photo

The rich eye London homes

"The Chinese are on their way," said a recent report in *The Times*, which warned that "Chinese billionaires have followed the waves of Russian oligarchs, Indians and Arab entrepreneurs by snapping up London's most expensive homes."

The report cited Joseph Lau, a Hong Kong businessman, who spent 363 million yuan on a six-floor mansion in Eaton Square, Belgravia. The white stucco house has its own cinema, a swimming pool, gym and servants' quarters.

Lau may be leading the pack as the country's super rich pounce on London's most exclusive areas.

With the dramatic growth of the Chinese economy, these people have the money to house-hunt in some of the world's most expensive residential enclaves.

"For the first time, we are seeing mainland Chinese looking

to invest in the residential property market," said Jonathan Hewlett, head of London residential for Savills, real estate agent.

According to a world wealth report published by Merrill Lynch and Capgemini last year, the number of dollar millionaires in China outstripped the UK's for the first time in 2008. Only the US, Germany and Japan now have more millionaires.

"The influx of Chinese wealth to Europe has been primarily in the London market," said Aaron Simpson, founder of Quintessentially, a luxury concierge service with offices in Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong.

"People feel that it's on an upward trend and it's a good time to buy. A lot of people come to take advantage of the private health care."

Estate agents in London are keen to target other Chinese buyers. Guy Meacock, director of

the London office of Prime Purchase, said many buyers were attracted to the UK by its private schools and decided to move there permanently. "We're planning to have a big drive on the Far East," he said.

Housing market in a bubble?

Lau's move is no surprise to his countrymen as the worry of domestic bubble surges. A recent *New York Times* story sternly warned that China's economy, especially the real estate industry, was headed for a crash.

"Its surging real estate sector, buoyed by a flood of speculative capital, looks like Dubai's, or worse," the report cited James Chanos, a Wall Street hedge fund investor, as saying.

Wang Xiaoguang, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Governance, said nobody believes the domestic property market is bubble-free.

A record surge in bank lending in 2009 coupled with the government stimulus package had created a relatively big bubble in China's economy, he said.

"China's real estate market is plagued with big bubbles, creating great risks for the financial sector," Yi Xianrong, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said.

Wang Zhaoxing, vice chairman of the China Banking Regulatory Commission, said recently at a conference that loans to property developers and residents to buy homes accounted for 20 percent of total new loans. He did not mention the time period.

However, Wang Xiaoguang, like other experts, was incredulous about Chanos' "crash theory."

"Bubbles do exist, but China's economy is not heading for a crash," Wang said.

(By Huang Daohen)

Analysis

New focus for investors

By Huang Daohen

Chinese businesspeople are starting to shift the focus of their investments amid worry of a market bubble, Wen Yijun, an analyst with Oriental Securities in Beijing, said.

According to a quarterly poll of investors and analysts by Bloomberg, 62 percent of the respondents said China was in a bubble.

Almost 30 percent said China was the second-riskiest market behind the European Union.

Therefore, investors, especially those in the private sector, have changed their

investment focus.

Wenzhou businessmen, for instance, are turning to mining in the northwest, Wen said.

The trend may be part of the central government's strategy to rejuvenate old industrial bases, he said. "The regions possess comparative advantages in energy and human resources."

Some cash is shifting to renewable and green energy industries.

Three decades of rapid growth have propelled the nation into the global spotlight as the third largest economy in the world, but that growth dec-

imated the environment.

Recognizing the dangers it created, the government has emphasized green industry.

"The country now sees the green movement as a necessity for long-term survival," Wen said.

Domestic shift aside, Wen said Chinese businessmen tend to invest from inbound to outbound. "The surge of buying overseas luxury houses is a signal."

"You can bet your bottom dollar that the flow of outbound investment from China will increase," Wen said.

For the past decade, China has been a well-publicized target for Western venture capitalists. But cash-rich Chinese are looking for investments outside the country.

"They have money. When the domestic market offers only bad choices, they turn to Europe and North America," Wen said.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, overall foreign cash investment in 2008 dropped 4 percent: Chinese outbound net investment in other markets increased 30 percent each year from 2002 to 2008.

Western Union targets Chinese remittance market



Amin Ng Photo provided by Western Union China

By Huang Daohen

Western Union, a global remittance agency, is marketing itself as a safe and reliable medium for overseas workers to send money home.

"China always has been an important market for Western Union considering the volume of the country's overseas migrants," Amin Ng, the company's chief representative in China, said at a painting competition in Fuzhou, Fujian Province.

The competition, attended by the children of overseas Chinese, was a tribute to those working overseas to support their families.

As many as 30 students from the Overseas Education School of Fujian Normal University attended the campaign last week and created a 24-meter-long scroll painting.

"Chinese New Year is a significant festive and cultural celebration. Western Union has made it possible for the children of migrant workers to capture their greetings and affection for their loved ones overseas through visual art and painting," Ng said.

As of last September, the company had 354,000 service locations across the world and 25,000 locations in China.

"That means we are able to help overseas migrants send their hard earned money quickly to their loved ones at home," Ng said.

According to a report by the China News Services, the number of Chinese living and working overseas hit 48 million at the end of 2008, with 6 million people who emigrated after the country's reform and opening in the late 1970s.

Emigrants are spread all over the world, with Asia having the largest population of overseas Chinese. America, Europe and Oceania are the destinations for most new Chinese migrants, the report said.

Going abroad to work or open a new business are the main reasons people leave, said Li Juan, who works for the money-transfer service of the Agricultural Bank of China.

"With the increasing number of Chinese living abroad, it is inevitable China will remain a big market for the remittance business," Li said.

Li said the country receives annual remittances valued at 170 billion yuan, mostly from the US and Saudi Arabia. "In the next five years, China, or rather Asia, will be the top destination for global remittances."

"The region will become a powerhouse because of the economic boom and the development in science and technology," Li said.

The World Bank was optimistic about the global remittance market. According to its latest report, remittances from the developing countries are projected to grow to 2.9 percent in 2010 and 6.3 percent in 2011.

Chen Guangbiao's Show

Top philanthropist criticized for seeking publicity

By Zhang Dongya

A photograph of philanthropist Chen Guangbiao beside a wall of 100-yuan bills is spreading online. He recently raised 40 million yuan, 3 million of which was from his own pockets, for poor families in five provinces.

He received praise for his generosity, and criticism for the publicity tied to his gift. Chen said he is not afraid of being criticized for putting on a show. "I want to make the 'show' bigger so that more people will get involved and emulate me," Chen said.



Chen Guangbiao stands behind a wall of banknotes and announces his new charity trip to the west next month. CFP Photo

Last Friday, Chen, 42, the president of Jiangsu Huangpu Renewable Resources Company, constructed a "money wall" at the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China's (ICBC) Jiangsu Branch to collect donations. The wall had 330 "bricks" made up of 100-yuan bills worth 100,000 yuan.

Earlier this year, Chen organized the charity event National Entrepreneurs' Spring Festival Consolation to Five Western Provinces to raise money so that poor families in Guizhou, Sichuan and Yunnan, as well as Tibet and Xinjiang Autonomous Region will have something to celebrate in the new lunar year.

The event raised 43 million yuan: 3 million from Chen and another 40 million from 127 entrepreneurs.

The money will be placed inside 80,000 envelopes, each containing 1,000 to 2,000 yuan. The donors will form five groups that will each be assigned to distribute money in one province.

Acts of philanthropy have traditionally been anonymous, so Chen's behavior is making waves. He is, by nature, a showman: during his fundraising drive last week, he performed a magic trick before the cameras.

"I've been a philanthropist for 10 years. Although there are people saying I'm putting on a show, I'm hoping more will emulate my 'performance.' If more people

did, more needy people will get help," Chen said.

The entrepreneurs also collected grain, oil, quilts and warm clothing. Chen said he and his family will spend Spring Festival with their recipients in the west. The group has coordinated their project with the respective local governments.

Chen caught the public eye when he brought 60 heavy-duty vehicles and more than 100 machine operators to Sichuan's earthquake zone a day after the temblor struck in 2008.

He also distributed cash to quake victims he saw along the road. On his first day, he handed out at least 10,000 yuan.

Chen, to date, has donated 1 billion yuan to charity, which makes him the country's top philanthropist. But he is best known for his brand of philanthropy: pressing cash into the palms of the needy.

Chen said this does not mean he does not trust intermediary groups like nongovernment organizations, but that he wanted to give help directly, speedily.

The tycoon has released his company's financial report and total donations in 2009. According to the documents, he donated 70 percent of the firm's profits. "I ensure that all the donated money can be accounted for, and we welcome inquiry from the media and the people," Jiangsu Huangpu Renewable Resources is engaged in developing renewable resources and in recycling.

Comment

Credibility and transparency are key

One reason why Chen Guangbiao chose to be high-profile is because charities in the country are stricken with a lack of credibility. People doubt every phase of the donation process: the people who run it, how money is transmitted to recipients and how it is used. A solid reputation is vital to charities, but some taint the system so much that the public even denigrates person-to-person donation.

When the public loses its trust in charity organizations, the only way to turn things around is to promote transparency. Every charity needs to do things "loudly" before the media and the masses. We say "China is on its way toward becoming a leading philanthropist"; this goal requires the public's understanding and support.

— Zhang Tianwei, commentator with Beijing Youth Daily

Let the people know

What Chen did was noble. If anybody thinks he does this to get noticed, they're missing the point. When people make

it known that they give large amounts of money to charity, it grabs people's attention and encourages others to follow.

Where I come from, the US, it seems most philanthropists publicize what they do. It creates a good image for the person doing it, and maybe the businesses they run. More importantly, it thrusts disadvantaged people under the limelight, showing other people what is happening around them, letting them know there are people out there who need their help.

Sure, there is more than one reason to give: tax breaks, a better image. But the big reason to do it is to help people, and to show others how they too can help.

— Dean, American expat

All charity is good

Chinese people commend meekness and humility, but people who are the opposite cannot be vilified for who they are. We appreciate those who secretly make donations, but those like Chen Guangbiao are also giving.

I don't agree that Chen did it to promote his company. Indeed,

his behavior has attracted good will toward his company, but isn't it admirable to go for a win-win situation?

— Sun Shuqing, salesman in Tianjin

Not a long-term solution

Chen's motivation is good and his work is transparent. But he needs to rethink whether his one-to-one donations are really helping the neediest. Even if he coordinates with local governments, as an outsider, it is hard to accurately reach the right people.

It is also difficult to tell who should get living allowances, since there are many factors to consider. Among disabled people for instance, there are the partially disabled and the severely disabled. Our goal is to go from traditional patterns of philanthropy to modern modes, to switch from personal charity to organizational philanthropy. Chen is caring and kind-hearted, but his behavior should not be advocated as a long-term solution.

— Yang Tuan, researcher on philanthropy

Background

China's modern-day philanthropy

The 2009 *Blue Book of Philanthropy: Annual Report on China's Philanthropy Development*, published by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), said the country currently has 10,000 charity organizations staffed by 100,000 people.

Zheng Yuanchang, the director of the philanthropy and

donation department at the Ministry of Civil Affairs, said that many organizations are based in Shanghai and Zhejiang and Shandong provinces.

The structure varies from region to region. Charities in Zhejiang are tied to the private sector, with 80 percent of donations coming from private enterprises. In Shandong,

the local government heavily promotes charities in both urban and rural areas. Shanghai, on the other hand, fosters an environment for various models of charities, and the city sponsors the most charity events nationwide.

Philanthropy on the mainland began in the mid-1990s, making it only 15 years old.

An only child's definition of success

'80s babies confused and anxious as they turn 30

By Han Manman

When Confucius said a person in his 30s should already have a career and a family, the philosopher had no way of predicting that 2,000 years later China would institute a family-planning policy that will dramatically alter its social landscape.

This year, children born in 1980 – the first full year the family-planning policy was in effect – turn 30. A recent study reveals that these men and women, part of the “post-80s” generation, are more confused and anxious about life than their elder peers. Many are unsatisfied with their living conditions, some fear family responsibility and most have become slaves to a mortgage, car loan or child.

What went wrong with this group and what does its future look like?

Bitter age of 30

“Based on what Confucius said, by now I should already have a house, a car, a wife and maybe a child – but I have none of them,” Lin Feng says.

He strikes a match to light his cigarette, then smiles wryly, “Am I a loser?”

Lin, born in 1980, holds a postgraduate degree from a well-known Beijing university. But that seems to be his only adult achievement in a world defined by titles, possessions and romantic relationships.

Five years ago, he landed a job with a foreign company after leaving school. Despite a monthly salary of 5,000 to 6,000 yuan – triple what some classmates in second-tier cities were making – he was unhappy.

After deducting living expenses such as apartment rent, transportation and food, Lin says he only saved as much as unskilled laborers. There was no way he could have bought a house, much less a car.

“I once promised my girlfriend that when I reached 30, I’d buy a house and a car, and we’d get married,” he says. “But I overestimated my capability. I have nothing, and my girlfriend is gone.”

Compared to Lin, Wang Chengjin, a water conservation engineer, is much luckier. Another 1980 baby, Wang is married and bought a house two years ago. He is planning to buy a car soon. But he also has many worries.

“I will be spending my savings if I get a car, since payments for the monthly house loan are already a huge burden,” Wang says. “But I have to buy it. It denotes social status for a man my age.”

Wang says he used to have loftier ambitions: to get an MBA and to change jobs so he could explore his potential in other fields. But now, with the huge burden of a home mortgage – soon a car loan, maybe even a child – he has no choice but to stay glued to the ground and inch forward like a snail.

An anxious, nostalgic generation

Finances, family and career are the top three concerns of people born in 1980, a recent survey reveals. It polled nearly 10,000 men and women born in 1980 and living in major cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.



Many young Chinese believe they should have a house, a car and a spouse once they hit their 30s.

IC Photos

The study, a collaboration between recruitment website zhaopin.com and the *Mirror*, shows that more than 60 percent of respondents are unsatisfied with their salary and fear family responsibility.

More than 50 percent said their abilities fall short of their dreams and that they saw no future in their jobs. Nearly half of the respondents had neither a house, a car nor a spouse.

“The low salaries and low job recognition juxtaposed with the fast-paced life and social pressures make young people feel a dual burden: one self imposed, the other from society,” Zhao Lipeng, a Beijing psychologist, said.

This confusion is vividly illustrated by a popular online post: “When we were children, jobs were assigned, but when we grew

up and got a job, we realized it could only support our day-to-day life; when we were children, there was government-subsidized housing, but when we began earning money, we found that skyrocketing housing prices made buying a house a dream.”

“When we were not involved in the stock market, even the stupid earned money from it, but when we dove into the market, only then did we discover that we were stupid; when we were young, women were willing to marry a man even if he only owned a bicycle, but when we reached marriageable age, it became difficult to ask a girl to get married without owning a house and a car. Even when we get married, we also need to struggle in the face of the rising costs of raising a child and the burden of supporting four parents in an aging society.”

A wider social problem

Social scientists say the burdens of 1980’s men and women are not theirs alone.

“The difficulty of being ‘established at 30’ is not just a problem of the post-80s generation, but the entire society’s pain,” says Yang Xiong, head of the adolescent studies department at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

He says the pressure of getting a house and a car has no connection with Confucius’ concept of being “established at 30.” “When society emphasizes material success and uses it as a measure of one’s accomplishment, that is wrong and triggers in young people anxiety about life and the future,” the professor says.

“And who said a man must be well established in his 30s?” Yang says, explaining that Confucius’ famous words were spoken in an era when a person’s average life span was 40 years. Now it is double that. “From this standpoint, a man in his 30s is just like the rising sun.”

Yang says the uneven distribution of resources and unequal work opportunities also exacerbate the pressure to be “successful.”

Within the region, young Japanese are also facing the same problem. Japanese media are rife with stories about how the younger generation have low-paying jobs and cannot afford to own a home.

However, they are not as miserable and as confused as their Chinese counterparts, says Kato Yoshikazu, a Japanese researcher who focuses on Sino-Japanese culture and has a special interest in the two countries’ post-80s generation.

“Many Chinese think, ‘no house, no wife, no face,’ but in Japan owning a house is not as important, even if it’s connected to married life,” says Kato. He says many young Japanese do not mind renting a small apartment or living with their parents until they can afford their own home after years of hard work.

Kato also says Japanese women do not put such strict housing and car requirements on their fiancé.

“This is not a personal problem, but reflects society’s collective value orientation. ‘Not being well established at 30’ is not the younger generation’s fault,” he says.



Many post-80s couples become slaves to their children because of the rising costs of raising a child.

Social history of the post-80s generation

1980: China institutes family-planning policy. Most couples are only allowed one child.

1992: A Sino-Japanese camp triggers a fierce national debate about China’s post-80s generation being overly spoiled. The assertion sticks and society begins to pay closer attention to the group.

1998: The Internet becomes popular in the country and young people get hooked on chatting and online games.

1999: China carries out a college admission expansion. More post-80s children get an opportunity to enter college.

2000: Blogging becomes big and post-80s young adults use it to voice their opinions.

2003: Chinese media call some members of the group “moonlight clans”: people who blow their salary each month.

2004: Post-80s writer and blogger Han Han – considered a leading voice of the generation – appears on the cover of *TIME*’s Asia edition. Western media begin paying attention to the group.

2005: Public debate ensues on the “boomerang child” phenomenon. The post-80s people are blamed as ignorant and selfish.

2006: The post-80s children reach marriage age; quick marriages and quick divorces become a new trend. The group is accused of lacking a sense of responsibility.

2008: The public’s negative attitude toward the group slowly swings to the other spectrum. Their patriotism comes under the spotlight amid protests during the Olympic torch relay and the Beijing Games. Their contributions to relief efforts after the Sichuan earthquake are acknowledged.

2009: The popular TV series *Dwelling Narrowness* starts a controversy about excessive housing prices and the post-80s generation’s attitude toward life. The term “ant tribe” goes into fashion to describe well-educated young people who cannot get a decent-paying job.

2010: The 1980 babies turn 30, a milestone age.

US student seeks help for paralyzed Chinese girlfriend

By Liang Meilan

At the newly-built Dalong New Village in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, people often see a tall, slim foreigner assisting a handicapped Chinese woman, holding her hand as she took shaky steps.

The foreigner is Colin Pemp, 28, a student from Idaho, US. He is currently studying Chinese at Suzhou University and works part-time as an English tutor. The woman is Xiaohua, Pemp's girlfriend, who became partially paralyzed after of a traffic accident in 2008.

The couple were walking down a street one evening in July 2008 when Xiaohua was knocked down by a motorcycle and the right side of her head hit a sharp rock. She was in a coma for a month, and when she regained consciousness found she no longer had any sensation on the left side of her body.

While Xiaohua was in a coma in the hospital's intensive care unit, Pemp spent 4,000 to 8,000 yuan a day on her medical bills. Xiaohua,

originally from Hezhou, Guangxi Province, comes from a poor family, so Pemp was their only hope.

Pemp asked his parents for help, and he and some friends also organized a fundraising bazaar. "We needed 50,000 yuan for medical care and two big operations," he said.

"To ask the driver for money was not going to help. He was an uneducated poor laborer who did not receive any driver's training," he said. "I don't want to shift the blame to an impoverished man."

To help Xiaohua walk again, Pemp bought her a treadmill and helped her to exercise every day. His mother, a teacher at a handicapped school in the US, came over last year to help with Xiaohua's care.

He also hired a nursemaid to help Xiaohua with basic tasks, like getting dressed, bathing and going to the bathroom.

"Xiaohua's condition is improving. She can walk short distances

using a cane," Pemp said, describing her as "80 percent recovered." But he said "the risk of her falling down is still high because her balance is just average."

To speed up her recovery, Pemp said Xiaohua needs to be moved to a rehabilitation center, with trained therapists and the necessary facilities and equipment.

"I cannot afford it though I do the best I can to make money. The fees are really high," Pemp said. "The money I've made is only enough for our daily expenses, apartment rent and the nursemaid."

Apart from money, the couple's other big problem is who will take care of Xiaohua when Pemp finishes his studies and returns to the US.

"I promised to stay until she can walk on her own and start her own business," he said. "But it seems unfair to me to stay in China for the rest of my life. I hope some organization or the government can continue to take care of her when my visa expires."



Colin Pemp helping Xiaohua with her daily exercise.

Photo provided by Colin Pemp

Veteran BBC presenter hosts CRI program



Susan Osman

Photo provided by Dailymail.com

Former BBC presenter Susan Osman has signed a one-year contract with China Radio International (CRI) to host a prime-time breakfast show called The Beijing Hour. The news and current affairs program began airing January 25 on 91.5FM.

Osman, 51, has worked in broadcasting for 28 years, including a stint at BBC News Channel and BBC World. She anchored the news program on BBC One, the network's national flagship general entertainment channel, for 14 years, and hosted a show at BBC Radio Bristol for eight years.

Osman said she left British broadcasting because her age had become an insurmountable barrier to career advancement.

"There seems to be a culture of ageism in broadcasting, and it particularly affects women," she said. "I've had so many female colleagues who dropped out in their early 40s, which is a shame because an older woman can bring wisdom and empathy. There doesn't seem to be many places for older women in broadcasting in (Britain)."

Encouraged by her son Matthew, 20, an Oxford University student who lived in China for a year, Osman decided to restart her career here.

"In China, they revere experience," she said. "The older you are, the better. I got the impression that my future boss actually wanted me to be older when

I finally told him my age during the interview." Osman began her work at CRI in December 2009.

Her boss Li Peichun, director of CRI English service, described Osman as highly professional in sound editing, broadcasting, timing, as well as having a "top-quality" voice.

"Knowing little about the Chinese media, she has to learn a lot and do a lot of preparation for each broadcast," Li said. "To ensure a high-quality breakfast show early, at 7 am, Osman has to get up at 2 am and be at the studio by 4 am." The Beijing Hour is broadcast on weekdays at 7 to 8 am, with a replay at 7 to 8 pm.

Osman said she first learned

about China as a child through storybooks featuring photos of ancient Chinese men with queues. She later developed a love for Chinese food, which earned her the nickname "Susan Wong" from her parents.

In her 30s, she discovered acupuncture to treat her backache. She said she was delighted to have found a doctor who is continuing her treatment in Beijing. Osman said she is working hard to learn Chinese with the help of a private tutor. One of the first things she asked her teacher to do was to help her put together a grocery list in Chinese, so she could buy other food besides "jidan," or eggs.

(By Liang Meilan)

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Cultural program offers free gifted-child evaluations

By Liang Meilan

A free, two-week program to determine whether a child is gifted started at Rainbow Theater, Haidian District, last Sunday. The project is being conducted by a group of European teachers who are in Beijing on a cultural exchange program.

The four teachers can evaluate if a child, between the ages of 3 and 8, is gifted in problem solving, the performing arts or general creativity. Consultations are held daily, except for Monday and Tuesday, through January 31.

All the evaluators are experts in early childhood education. Among them is Kathleen Bryant, former director of evaluations at WhizKids International, who is preparing to open a gifted children's academy in Toronto this September.

"Over 120 families have taken advantage of the evaluations. Most of them were expat families and about 25 percent were Chinese families," said Lloyd Southworth, community affairs director of the China Trade Commission (CTC) Beijing Office, a Hong Kong-based nongovernment agency that sponsored the teachers' exchange program.

The CTC spearheads the gifted-child evaluation program primarily as a service to Beijing expats who might feel that the local school system is too preoccupied with academics to identify special skills and creative talents, the



Two girls join the gifted child.

Photo provided by Lloyd Southworth.

organization said in a statement.

"Traditional Chinese schools tend to suppress a child's creativity and imagination. And while the international schools of Beijing are much more liberal, children growing up in a strange new country might become temporarily more withdrawn, reclusive or antisocial

because of the language barrier," CTC's Executive Director Anthony DeMarco said.

Cai Jingkun, one of Beijing's foremost experts on child development and early education, commended the project. "The earlier we can identify that special creative spark or skill in a child, the

better, faster and more fully it can be developed," he said.

The evaluations are conducted by observing the children in a pre-arranged play setting where the teachers watch for markers of creativity, leadership, problem solving and social skills. Each teacher prepares a report, which is consolidated with the others' in a two-page summary for the parents.

Although the evaluations are not 100-percent conclusive, the profiles are considered to be more than 90-percent accurate by child psychologists familiar with Mensa and WhizKids International testing and evaluation methods, the CTC said. Mensa is the world's largest organization of people with high IQs – those in the top 2 percent of the population.

Gifted child evaluations normally cost 1,500 yuan, but are free for the CTC's first 500 participants. For more information, contact CTC's community affairs coordinator Leslie An at 8261 5180 or promoreservations@gmail.com.

The CTC was established in 1996 to assist small and mid-sized businesses expand globally through joint ventures with companies in Canada, the US and the UK. The organization's Beijing office, opened in 2009, helps promote social integration between Eastern and Western children. Their projects include free magic shows, Santa Claus visits to malls and cross-cultural children's birthday parties.

Making malian flower knots a hit among foreigners

By Liang Meilan

At least 15 people gathered at the China Culture Center (CCC) last Sunday to learn how to make a malian flower knot bracelet under the instruction of a local folk artist.

"Tying Chinese knots is one of our most popular classes. Every time the class is held, the classroom is full," said Yu Lan, a staff member at the CCC, a cultural education organization and tour operator.

Corine Anker, from the Netherlands, was excited about the lessons. "I've already recommended this class to my friends. I have not had time to buy materials myself, but I'm definitely going to make more knots," she said. Participants were mostly foreigners, but a few locals came too.

The lessons were given by Wang Qing, an expert in thread knotting who learned the art from her mother as a child. "She has more than 10 years of experience in creating thread-made handicrafts like Chinese knots. She is a compassionate artist who often voluntarily teaches laid-off workers or the handicapped so they can turn the knowledge into a means of earning a living," Yu said.

The malian flower knot brace-



Wang Qing, an expert in thread knotting teach foreigners how to make Chinese knots.

Photo provided by Chinese Culture Club

let is a hand-made, auspicious decorative ornament dating back to ancient times. It is made by tying a piece of colorful one-

meter-long thread to form a bracelet with a malian flower-like pattern. Jade pieces or small porcelain balls are sometimes added

as adornments.

It is still a popular decoration in local homes and has been turned into a souvenir.

Event

Montessori sensory elements to visual arts

The International Montessori Teaching Institute is hosting this bilingual event for people interested in early childhood education. Activities include networking among Montessori teachers and the latest information about sensory activities and how they relate to visual arts.

Where: The International Montessori Teaching Institute, 688 Glory Palace, 2 Shunfu Lu, Renhe Town, Shunyi District

When: January 30, 10 am – 2:30 pm

Tel: 8949 6877

Cost: 100 yuan (includes lunch)

Music lessons for kids

My Little Mozart Music Studio is offering group keyboard classes for children 4 and older. Twinkle Toes Keyboard Class is designed to develop students' hearing memory. Its topics include "developing general musicianship" and "keyboard geography."

Where: My Little Mozart Music Studio, Block 5, Lishuijiayuan (between Park Avenue and Palm Springs residences), Chaoyang District

When: January 30, 1-2 pm

Web: mylittlemozart.com

UCCA Saturday concert

Every Saturday afternoon, La Suite, on the second floor of UCCA, hosts live, unplugged music performances characterized by local avant-garde sounds and East-West mixes. Participants include Waterland Kuanyin, Mini Midi Festival, Carry Show and other domestic music event organizers.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Juxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: January 30, 2-4 pm

Tel: 6438 6675

Cost: Free

Cartoon dough figures

Dough art is a Spring Festival tradition. Until the festival, Li Yunfeng of China World Hotel's pastry team will give demonstrations of how to make dough art. He will create *Monkey King*, *Hello Kitty* and *Doraemon* at the hotel's Scene a Cafe.

Where: Scene a Cafe, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Daily, 10 am – 7 pm

Tel: 6505 2266

Cost: 60-88 yuan, depending on the artwork's size

(By Liang Meilan/Wei Ying)

Job fairs for Beijing and Shanghai foreigners in April

By Zhao Hongyi

The State Administration of Foreign Experts' Affairs (SAFEA) is holding its annual Job Fair for Foreigners in both Beijing and Shanghai in April.

About 217,000 expats are living and working in China, according to the agency's statistics. Because of the global recession, an increasing number of foreigners are looking for jobs in China, said Yang Jiameng, an official at SAFEA.

But the domestic job market for foreigners is shrinking, said Colin Friedland, general manager of China Expert International, a company that helps foreigners find jobs and relocate to China. "Many Chinese professionals can already speak very good English," he said. "Foreigners need more professional qualifications to find their ideal jobs here." English skills are no longer the edge they used to be for foreigners seeking work.

Yang said some sectors continue to have a huge demand for foreign talents, such as education, finance and IT. "But the demands are shifting to more professional industries" like banking and investment, he said.

SAFEA held its first spring-time Job Fair for Foreigners in 2005, which drew some 200 participants. The number jumped to 1,200 in 2009.

Last November, the agency held another Job Fair for Foreigners in Beijing and Shanghai, which saw about 700 job seekers.



More foreigners are looking for jobs in China through large-scale job fairs.

CFP Photo

SAFEA, established to supervise the hiring of foreign workers, invites Chinese companies from across the country to participate in its job fairs.

Last August, it organized the first International Professionals' Exchanges Conference in Shenzhen, the largest recruitment event for foreigners in China in the past decade. Participating companies sought personnel for cutting-edge industries like design and global branding. The conference is expected to be held in Shen-

zhen annually.

Three months later, 1,000 headhunters and training agencies from 45 countries participated in a SAFEA forum that sought to hire 50,000 senior professionals for their China offices.

Jobs offered at the April job fair will be listed on job website chinajob.com and the weekly English magazine *Beijing Review*.

SAFEA Job Fair for Foreigners in Beijing

Where: Zurich Hall, Swissotel Grand Shanghai, 1 Yuyuan Lu,

Jing'an District

When: April 3, 9 am - 4 pm
Tel: 6894 0923 (Look for Wang Xi, Xu Huijun or Hu Chenjia)

Email: jobfair_sh@chinajob.com
SAFEA Job Fair for Foreigners in Beijing

Where: 2/F, Swissotel Beijing, 2 Chaoyangmen Bei Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: April 17, 9 am - 4 pm
Tel: 6846 8025 (Look for Yang Jaimeng or Zhang Yan)
Email: jobfair@chinajob.com

Beijing legislator seeks comments on animal protection bill

By Zhao Hongyi

A legislator with the Beijing People's Congress is seeking comments on the draft of their animal protection bill scheduled for approval in April.

Chang Jiwen, main author of the "Law Against Pet Abuse" and a law professor at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), said he and his co-authors "have already received more than 300 emails and 400 phone calls" since the draft law was completed four months ago.

The bill prohibits any type of abuse against animals, including wildlife and poultry. It also requires "animal welfare" such as medical treatment, proper handling during transport or shipping and humane slaughter.

Chang insisted on including the clause on "prohibiting the eating of pets like cats and dogs" though he is facing severe pressure from the Chinese public known for its healthy appetite for such meats.

The draft says people caught eating cat and dog meat may face a fine of 5,000 yuan and 15 days in jail. Restaurants selling these meats can be fined from 10,000 up to half a million yuan.

Many restaurants in rural



Young people dressed in animal costumes' campaign for animal protection.

CFP Photo

areas routinely use dog and cat dishes to attract customers. A few years ago, a number of cats slaughtered for food were exposed on the Internet. Some of the cases were revealed by the perpetrators themselves, many of them teenagers.

"The issue needs to be resolved sooner or later," Chang said, "and it is better to solve it early rather than late."

The China National Native

Products and Animal By-products Import and Export Corporation expressed their full support for the bill, hoping the law would help improve the reputation of its exports, like cashmere and eiderdown.

Chang and his co-authors changed the bill's name, originally "Pets' Welfare Protection Law," after considering suggestions from interest groups. Chang said the change reflected society's

regard for human welfare as a more urgent issue.

The professor welcomes suggestions on the draft law from readers of *Beijing Today*.

Mailing address: Institute of Law, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), 15 Shatan Bei Jie, Dongcheng District, Beijing 100720

Tel: 6403 5493
Email: changjiwenlaw@yahoo.com.cn

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyang@ynet.com

I want to wire some money to a farmer friend who lives in Gansu Province. Do you know which bank charges the lowest fee?

Before March 31, any online domestic transaction through Shenzhen Development Bank is free of charge. All you need to do is drop by any branch and activate an online account. You can also try Shanghai Pudong Development Bank, which offers free mobile banking services until then. But its mobile-banking services are only offered to China Mobile users. Call the mobile phone company to apply for the service. If you want to transfer the money over the counter, the Communication Bank of China seems to charge the lowest fee of 5.50 yuan for transactions of less than 10,000 yuan.

I'm planning a trip to Yunnan to visit Lijiang and Shangri-La. I will be flying straight from Beijing and wouldn't have time to adjust to the altitude difference. In this case, would taking the train be better? What can I do to cope with altitude sickness?

Flying is OK, since Yunnan's airport is not located at a very high altitude. Bring a small oxygen tank if you're worried about altitude sickness. You can get it at any pharmacy. If you're planning to climb high mountains like Yulong Mountain, make sure you're in good shape and do not have any heart problems.

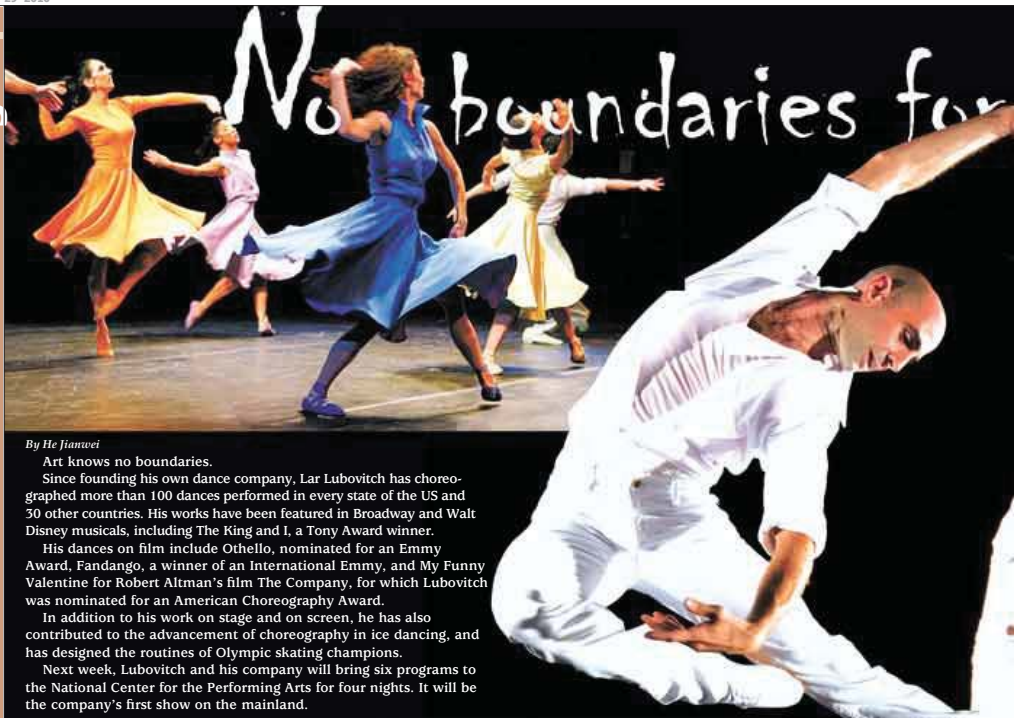
I'm not too happy with the local detergents. Any brand suggestions?

Most domestic brands work quite well when used with warm or hot water. In cold water, they don't remove stains effectively. If the latter is your only option, try adding baking soda to your load, which is sold in most supermarkets. If you want environmentally-friendly detergents, try the imported brands at Lohao City (lohaocity.com) or World Health Store (Room 2152, Chawai SOHO north tower, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District, Tel. 5900 2209). Soap nuts are a cheap, natural alternative, which you can order on taobao.com.

My vacuum cleaner that I purchased in the UK won't work anymore. I want to get it fixed, but the warranty only applies to the UK. Is there any shop that would be able to handle this kind of work?

Try getting in touch with Keminyuan, a mechanical products repair shop in Beijing, Tel. 400 7796 432.

(By Liang Meilan/Wei Ying)



By He Jianwei

Art knows no boundaries.

Since founding his own dance company, Lar Lubovitch has choreographed more than 100 dances performed in every state of the US and 30 other countries. His works have been featured in Broadway and Walt Disney musicals, including *The King and I*, a Tony Award winner.

His dances on film include *Othello*, nominated for an Emmy Award, *Fandango*, a winner of an International Emmy, and *My Funny Valentine* for Robert Altman's film *The Company*, for which Lubovitch was nominated for an American Choreography Award.

In addition to his work on stage and on screen, he has also contributed to the advancement of choreography in ice dancing, and has designed the routines of Olympic skating champions.

Next week, Lubovitch and his company will bring six programs to the National Center for the Performing Arts for four nights. It will be the company's first show on the mainland.

It is too late to start dance when you are 20, but not when you are Lubovitch.

Born in Chicago in 1943, Lubovitch was a gymnast in high school. He was active as a child, but never athletic. He had no tolerance for team sports, and instead found himself in the gymnastics program.

It was not until he was an art student and a gymnast at the University of Iowa that he encountered dance. One day, a woman came to the gym and asked if any gymnasts wanted to dance, because she was looking for men able to easily lift their partners. Lubovitch volunteered.

In 1971, he saw his first dance performance when the Jose Limon Dance Company visited campus. After that show, he decided to make his own dance. "I discovered the two things that I did best — art and gymnastics — could fit together," Lubovitch says.

He preferred choreography to dance at first. "For me, becoming a dancer was a vehicle to becoming a choreographer," he says. So he studied dance at Juilliard School in New York with Limon and Martha Graham, both of whom were pioneering the art's modern form.

Although many important choreographers and dancers were his teachers, Lubovitch did not realize how important they were at that time. It was only when he began to create his own works that he felt their influence. Limon emphasized the natural forms of the dancers

and Graham put the human heart on stage. "Both of them have their unique techniques, which are like different languages for me. I put all these ideas together to make a new one," he says.

Lubovitch's *Concerto Six Twenty-Two*, created in 1986, became the most significant piece of the decade. It was choreographed as a response to the AIDS epidemic when the crisis peaked in New York.

"There had been no response from the dance world to the AIDS crisis, so I formulated this idea of a dance benefit called *Dancing for Life*," he says.

It was the first time he organized such an event since establishing his company in 1968.

The program debuted at Lincoln Center, and the participating dance companies helped raise \$1.5 million (10 million yuan) for people with AIDS in the US.

The central duet of the work was written for two men, a symbol emblematic of the time, and the theme is friendship. "Friendship was a very major theme because so many friends were helping friends through deep crisis and to death," he says.

The music he chose for the piece was Mozart's "Clarinet Concerto," which the composer created for his friend, the clarinetist Anton Stadler. Composed in 1791, the music was one of the last works Mozart wrote before his death and the only one he wrote for clarinet.

Concerto Six Twenty-Two is the only one that will

be performed every night from February 3 to 6 on Beijing's stage.

Aside from classical music, Lubovitch also likes to choreograph for jazz. His Jazz Trilogy consists of "Elemental Brubeck," a piece set to excerpts of Dave Brubeck's 1963 jazz suite "Time Change's"; "Nature Boy," set to pop by Chicago jazz stylist Kurt Elling; and a new piece, "Coltrane's Favorite Things," set to John Coltrane's famous interpretations of the Richard Rodgers classic "My Favorite Things."

The first and last pieces will be included in the company's Beijing performance, with "Coltrane's Favorite Things" making its Asia debut.

Every movement in a Lubovitch dance is inspired by the music. In "Elemental Brubeck," the dance opens with a long and exciting solo of a man whipping over the stage with huge jumps punctuated by jazzy twists of the torso and swiveling hips.

Painting is another vehicle for his choreography, and he often draws the scenes for his dancers. "I'm afraid I invented a unique method to choreograph," he says.

Lubovitch has choreographed dances for four musicals, including the Broadway show *The Red Shoes* in 1993, the Broadway revival of *The King and I* in 1996 and Walt Disney's stage version of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* from 1999 to 2002.

He has created ice dances for Olympic gold medalists John Curry, Peggy Fleming and Dorothy Hamill since the 1960s and choreographed the full-length ice dance of *Sleeping Beauty*, starring Olympic medalists Robin Cousins and Rosalynn Summers, in 1998.

Because Lubovitch does not skate, he asked the athletes to attempt the movement he wanted and made adjustments from there. "The collaborations with ice skaters influenced me a lot in my later dances, which brought more flow to my works," he says.

"I discovered the two things that I did best — art and gymnastics — could fit together."

Painting is another vehicle for Lubovitch's choreography, and he often draws the scenes for his dancers.



Lubovitch

Gymnast, dancer, choreographer

Every moment in a Lar Lubovitch's dance is inspired by the music.

Photos provided by the National Center for the Performing Arts

axed Bill

Lubovitch Dance Company Premiere

he Mainland

Programs: Concerto Six Twenty-Two, New Star, Little Rhapsodies
Performers: Boltrane's Favorite Things
Time: February 3-4, 7:30 pm

Programs: Concerto Six Twenty-Two, My Funny Valentine, Jangle
Performers: Elemental Brubeck
Time: February 5-6, 7:30 pm
Venue: Theater Hall, National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi
 Yian Jie, Xicheng District
Ticket Price: 80-480 yuan
 655 0000

True crime thriller on the hunt for snakehead

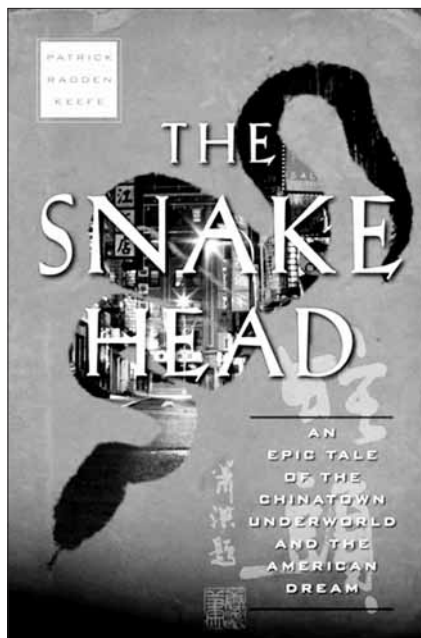
By Charles Zhu

An author and lawyer from Yale Law School recently produced the investigative exposé *Snakehead: An Epic Tale of the Chinatown Underworld and the American Dream* (414pp, Doubleday, \$27.50). It chronicles the disastrous end of an old battered ship called the Golden Venture that tried to smuggle illegal immigrants from China to Long Island, New York, on June 6, 1993.

In the book, Patrick Radden Keefe gives a detailed account of a universal theme: hope for a better life in the US. Keefe's array of characters include smugglers, gangsters, prosecutors, cops, seamen and do-gooders. He recounts how many people paid large sums of cash and assumed life-threatening risks to enter the US illegally. His perspective is multiple: from those of the immigration agents, the snakehead and its clients.

On a fateful day, the ship that carried 300 illegal immigrants foundered in the pre-dawn darkness in shallow water not far from the seashore. It went aground. All of a sudden there was an uneasy stir among the crowd and some, scared of capture, jumped ship. Ten men drowned and others were seriously injured. Keefe describes the nameless mass at the moment of rescue as having "eyes wild, teeth chattering, bellies grossly distended from gulping salt water." All ended up in prison.

Little did police know the Golden Venture would lead back to an unassuming grandmother: Cheng Chui Ping, colloquially known as Sister Ping, a New York Chinatown merchant in



her 60s. Ping found her way into the US in 1981, became a successful merchant and opened a human-trafficking business as a snakehead.

Initially she ran a very hands-on business, often escorting customers on different legs of the journey to the US. But as she became more well-known, her business grew quickly and she could not keep up with demand. She ran an underground smuggling empire out of her hole-in-the-wall noodle shop.

Self-made and infamously amoral, Ping rose from peasant to international criminal. She was relentless in her charge for \$35,000 (240,000 yuan) a head and promised to return

the fee to clients who didn't make it in. The journey took weeks or months to cross rough waters in extremely unpleasant conditions, but her clients kept coming.

As an international crime boss, she built a complex and vicious global conglomerate, relying heavily on familial ties and employing one of Chinatown's most violent gangs, the Fuk Ching, to protect her power and profits – a "modest" \$40 million. Ping began subcontracting, and one of her fateful mistakes was subcontracting to the violent Chinatown murderer and gang leader Ah Kay.

Ping's ingenuity and drive were awe-inspiring not only to the Chinatown community but also to the law enforcement officials who could never quite catch her. Even as she topped its most-wanted list, it took the FBI and New York's police nearly 10 years to locate the elusive kingpin who exploited the American dream. In 2005, Ping faced trial in a federal court in New York City.

In an interview, Keefe said, "One thing that fascinated me about Sister Ping was that she had an incredibly good mind for business. She never had much education and operated an illegal operation for most of her career, but part of me thinks that had she chosen a different line of work she would have been running a Fortune 500 company."

"If this particular story is in some ways an unhappy one, it is also a story about the awesome power of optimism and bravery and hope, about the many twisting paths that bring strangers to this country, and about what it means to be – and to become – American," Keefe said in the book.

Love is timeless, but hardly perfect

By He Jianwei

The *Book of Poetry*, a collection of 305 poems dating back to 1000 BC, is one of the first collections of Chinese poems.

The dated Confucian classic opens with a love poem. But that is no coincidence, said Liu Li, a columnist who writes on Shanghai's *Youth Daily* and *Biba Magazine* (Chinese version).

Actually, more than a third of the volume is about love. People who lived thousands of years ago recorded the emotion in all its forms in their folk songs and stories, Liu said.

Liu uses the poems to explore modern conflicts between the sexes in *Secrets in Book of Poetry: Darkness and Sweetness in Love* (215pp, Chongqing University Press, 29.80 yuan), published last year.

Despite what we might like to believe, modern men and women face the same difficulties in love as their ancient counterparts.

"Human nature has not changed at



all during that long history," Liu said.

In 30 chapters, Liu enumerates the problems of modern love and their roots

in ancient poems. "Even extramarital love affairs and one-night stands made it into that collection," she said.

Liu said women remain at a disadvantage in love, although they have more equal rights and can compete with men in their careers.

"In human nature, men care more about position and their value to society than love. But women are animals of emotion," she said.

Her pessimism comes thinly veiled. Although she admits love is a sweet thing, she said human nature causes its bitterness. "Humans are selfish. When people in love don't like to change or compromise, problems occur," she said.

In the book, she is sympathetic to modern men – because women demand more far more from them: success and single-minded love.

She lashes out at women for making too much of love, noting that were it not so emphasized modern relationships would be riddled with fewer problems.

CNPIEC Bookstore book listing

The China National Publication Import and Export Corporation's (CNPIEC) bookstore recommends these new arrivals to *Beijing Today* readers.



Privileged

By Zoey Dean, 304pp, Grand Central Publishing, 100 yuan

Recent Yale graduate Megan Smith comes to Manhattan with big plans for a career in journalism and even bigger debts: \$75,000 in student loans. When she fails at a trashy tabloid job, she lands one last chance: tutoring the 72-year-old identical twins Rose and Sage Baker – the infamous Baker heiresses of Palm Beach, Florida, best known for their massive fortunes and penchant for flashing the paparazzi.



The Grand Finale

By Janet Evanovich, 246pp, Harper, 65 yuan

Berry Knudson has a talent for disaster, but when she climbed a tree to rescue a kitten, she was not prepared for the scrumptious hunk undressing in a nearby window, or her dive downward that would smash Jake Sawyer's pizza and win his heart. She takes classes, delivers pizzas and cares for three eccentric old ladies she rescued from the train station. But Sawyer thrives on a challenge, and he can be very inventive.



The Intruders

By Michael Marshall, 416pp, Harper, 65 yuan

It all begins with a visit from a childhood friend, a lawyer who needs help from Jack Whalen, ex-cop. The family of a noted scientist has been senselessly, brutally murdered, and the scientist is nowhere to be found. But Whalen has more pressing concerns – the past that drove him from the Los Angeles Police Department continues to haunt him. His wife has disappeared on a routine business trip to Seattle. She never checked into her hotel and is not answering her phone. A third missing person, a little girl in Oregon, is found miles away. But it soon becomes obvious she was hardly "innocent."

(By He Jianwei)

By Wang Yu

When people move on after an unsuccessful love affair, there are always touchstones they cannot bear to leave behind. These could be rings, shoes, a pack of cigarettes or a video game.

But those memories may put a crimp in future flings. Some entrust their secrets to friends – others turn to the love bank.

Gong Yelong, the 32-year-old keeper of secrets who calls himself "dinosaur," says his bank is more than a "deposit counter." In an era of fast-food romance, he hopes the deposits and withdrawals may teach people about the important things in life.

Saving memories

With his digital camera, T-shirt and bottle of Davidoff perfume safe with a friend in another city, Vincent Zhang felt relaxed. All the stuff was bought by another woman he was seeing the year before his marriage – souvenirs of love guaranteed to upset his wife.

When people move on to their next relationship, it is hard to erase the memory of the past. Some are blessed with the ability to forget, but most are not. Gong Yelong, owner of the city's love bank, opened his new business last December to solve that problem.

The bank is a studio on Gulou East Avenue that Gong rents with two friends. One is a designer and the other has a sidecar business. The studio hall is decorated like an exhibition room, with Gong's office in the inner room with two showcases and a laptop. The showcases store his customers' deposits.

"Working in this studio with friends is fun. Businesses always start from a small office," Gong says.

The 32-year-old shop owner used to be an art agent. Eight years ago he stumbled into the bank idea after hearing about a similar enterprise in Europe. But China was different then, and he did not think people would pay for that kind of service.

"Last year, a friend of mine told me he was having trouble dealing with his ex-girlfriend's belongings. So I thought it might be time to revisit the love bank idea," Gong says.

In 2004, six German artists made a love bank that works similar to a dating agency. However, Gong wanted to turn it into a real business. Most of his friends were pessimistic about the new concept shop.

"But I still think a love bank can find a place in such a big city where relationships are like McDonald's food: fast and meaningless. I hope to help people find real love," Gong says.

His Dinosaur's Love Bank was mentioned in local media, and since then its name has spread rapidly.

Story collector

Though the love bank is nothing but a new hype to those

who doubt Gong's motivation, he takes it very seriously.

"A kiss, a hug and a tasty breakfast are like monetary deposits. A fight, on the other hand, is like a withdrawal. That's my basic idea. Building a relationship is not an easy job, and the bank can help remind people of what is lost and found in love," Gong says.

People can choose to share their stories with each deposit by filling out an option tag. So far, the bank has the memories of 40 clients. The first client left a personal belonging for his one-and-a-half-year-old son.

"[It's not just] for lovers," Gong says. "The bank is open to those who want to preserve their best memories of all kinds of love."

The business has given Gong the chance to share in many people's stories. The showcase is topped by a green, stuffed snake from Ikea left by a man who just disappeared on his girlfriend. "That gentle snake wound around me until I couldn't breathe," the owner wrote on the paper. His ex-girlfriend was so jealous he could not even speak to another woman.

"I encounter such stories everyday. People need a place to communicate with others in a different way," Gong says.

Another client deposited two computer game discs given to him by his girlfriend when she left him. Like many game nuts, he spent too much time with his computer rather than with his girl.

"She just left him the discs and told him now he can play as much as he wanted. Now he has quit gaming," Gong says.

Just a start

Friends in the movie industry have shown an interest in Gong's love bank and the stories he has collected, but that is something for the future.

The bank is Gong's full-time job and the new business is still getting off the ground.

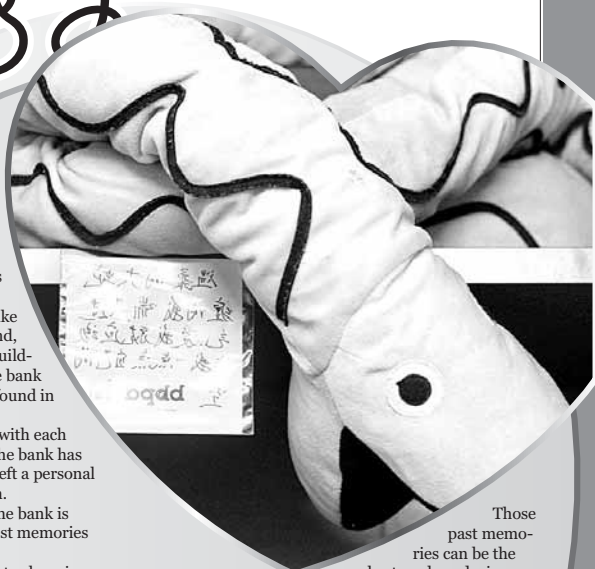
In addition to online promotions and word of mouth, he also hands out advertisements – at best he can give out 20 fliers every three hours. Dinosaur's Love Bank's clients pay according to the category and size of their deposit, but the revenue is not enough to break even.

"Everyone has a love story and I don't only serve those who have lost it. For men and women who are still in love, I can help record their best memories in words, videos, flash or songs. It depends on the clients," Gong says.

The clients' ex's belongings contains love stories that took place in the city. Gong Yelong, owner of the love bank, wants to be the listener.

Photos by Song Nannan

Storing your love

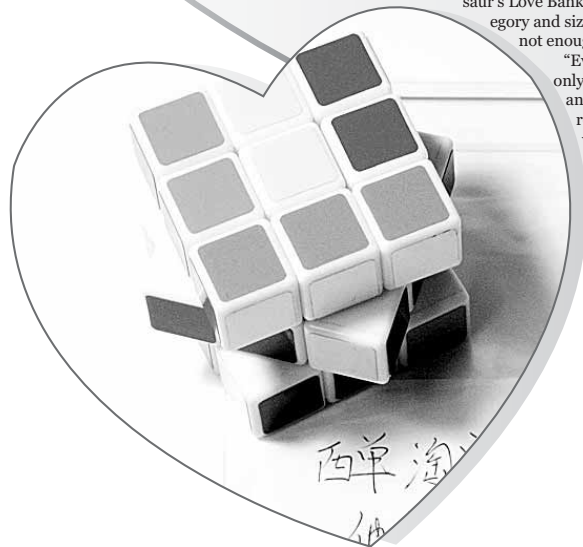


Those past memories can be the best apology during

future crisis, he says.

Love is serious business, and modern attitudes toward it are out of whack, he says. He is currently helping a man to track down a woman who helped him during his hardest time, and whom he promised to love.

"I'm confident [the shop] will survive," Gong says.



Homemade luxury goods offer quality and history

By Annie Wei

With the rise of the moneyed class, an increasing number of people are buying luxury products. The latest surveys show shoppers prefer foreign brands even if some homegrown names are equally good. Below are some domestic luxury labels worth a second look.



The leather saddle adds a touch of class.



A PA-02 model for the European market, 1,500 yuan
Photos by Vanessa Zhou

Updated vintage bike

People who care about the quality of their bicycle should check out Flying Pigeon: it sells not only quality, but a piece of the country's transportation history.

During the early decades of the People's Republic, Tianjin's Flying Pigeon became a symbol of an egalitarian social system that promised little comfort but a reliable ride through life. Throughout the 1960s and '70s, its bird logo could be found on almost all bicycles. It became the single most popular mechanized vehicle on the planet, becoming so ubiquitous that Deng Xiaoping defined prosperity as "a Flying Pigeon in every household."

In the early 1980s, the Flying Pigeon's 20-kilogram, black, single-speed models were the pride of workers nationwide, and the waiting list to get one could stretch into years. It also has been presented by the Chinese government as a gift to US President George Bush Sr., Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi and Cuban President Fidel Castro.

For today's cyclists, *Beijing Today* recommends Flying Pigeon's classic PA-02 series. It is "an indestructible, single-speed colossus with 28-inch wheels, fenders, a fully covered chain, a rear rack and push-rod brakes. A handlebar lever connects directly to the brake pads via a thin shaft of steel; there's no leverage, no adjustability and very little stopping power. Like Ford's Model T, any color you want is available, as long as you want black," says "Flight of the Pigeon" on bicycling.com. The all-black bike has a brown leather saddle that adds a touch of class.

Vanessa Zhou, a marketing executive at Flying Pigeon, said the company is manufacturing the latest PA-02 models exclusively for the European market. They will soon be available on the mainland, but till then, the company agreed to take special orders from *Beijing Today* readers.

PA-02s cost 1,500 yuan; two decades ago, they went for 150 yuan – equivalent to a worker's salary for two months. There is a well known story that back then a farmer offered to trade his entire season's crop for a speedier delivery of his Flying Pigeon.

Apart from its vintage models, Flying Pigeon also makes "luxury" mountain bikes that cost 40,000 yuan. This is the ideal ride when you're wearing Gucci, Hermes or Chanel.

Flying Pigeon

Where: 10 Denshou Lu, Dongli District, Tianjin

When: 9 am – 5 pm

Tel: 022-2478 0668

World's watch supplier

Do you want a classic mechanical watch but cannot afford a Cartier or Rolex? Seagull, with pieces that cost up to 200,000 yuan, has cheaper models that go for less than a thousand.

Seagull is one of the best known domestic watch brands. It was started in 1955 when the central government ordered that the north establish a watch industry. Four men in a small workshop in Tianjin with only a handful of tools set out to make the country's first wristwatch. Their prototype followed the Swiss Sindaco's five-jewel pin-level design. The factory was initially named Tianjin Wuyi Watch Factory, and its earliest models have since become sought after by watch collectors.

Now Seagull produces a quarter of the world's mechanical watches, supplying them to big international fashion brands like Armani. In 2006, the company opened an office in Basel, Switzerland.

Comments on numerous watch forums say Seagull is as good as watches made in Japan or Switzerland, but it is bogged down by its lack of recognition and innovation. It has a "very reliable quality among simple watches, but if you want a watch with high quality and multiple functions, Swiss watches are still better," one post says.

Seagull

Web: tian10.com



780 yuan



1,600 yuan



1,800 yuan

Photos provided by tian10.com

Warren Buffett's favorite suit



Warren Buffett in Trands suit

Photos provided by google.cn



If you're looking for a smart Spring Festival gift for your father, husband or boyfriend, a suit from Dayang Trands is a good choice. The brand attracted international media attention – and its domestic market share skyrocketed to 70 percent – after US billionaire entrepreneur Warren Buffett appeared in its promotional video last August.

Fortune magazine did a feature story on how Dayang Trands and Buffett crossed paths. In 2007, Buffett was visiting Dalian, Liaoning Province, when two Chinese tailors rushed into his hotel room and began taking his measurements.

Three weeks later, Buffett was back in the US when he received a package with two custom-made suits. The businessman loved them! In the ad, Buffett said he now has nine suits from Dayang and has thrown away others from high-end Italian fashion house Ermenegildo Zegna. He also said he introduced the brand to his right-hand man Charlie

Munger and Microsoft founder Bill Gates.

Fortune quoted Buffett as saying he likes Dayang suits because they don't "crease, and you could wear them day after day and they look like they just came back from the cleaners."

Dayang Trands was established in 1979 by Li Guilian, a 63-year-old woman in a rural area armed with only one sewing machine. Besides its suit business, Dayang also makes 12 million pieces of clothing annually for well-known US retailers like Macy's, Banana Republic and BCBG Max Azria.

The company has three boutiques in Beijing. Made-to-order suits cost 5,000 to 35,000 yuan, depending on fabric.

Dayang Trands – Shin Kong Plaza

Where: D4027, Shin Kong Plaza, 87 Jianwai

Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6598 1609

Little yard with a big menu

By Wang Yu

Restaurants around Houhai have a short life span, a victim of fickle tastes. Only six months ago we visited a barbecue in Dongming Hutong and now it's gone! In the same hutong is Little Yard Restaurant, which has survived its difficult first year and hopes to see many more seasons with its varied menu.

Like Tapas Cafe, the two-story restaurant is located in a courtyard. Unlike Tapas, its decorations are more ethnic Chinese, marked by red walls and vividly painted tablecloths.

Though its poster describes it as a Western restaurant, Little Yard offers everything from pasta and steak to Thai favorites.

Its chef recommends tom yum kung pots, Thailand's sour and spicy "national soup." The soup is usually made with prawns, chicken, fish or mixed seafood and straw or oyster mushrooms. It is the sourness that hits your taste buds, followed by a spicy explosion. Those who do not eat red meat can opt for seafood tom

yum. The price varies depending on the ingredients you choose.

On the Western food front, the restaurant offers mini beefsteak (48 yuan), one of its all-time hits. The steak is served on an iron plate with onion, green pepper, broccoli and potato fries. Its fried salmon with almond wine (118 yuan) should not be missed. The fish meat is made more tender with the wine's embrace.

Little Yard also offers "localized pizzas," such as kungpao chicken pizza (58 yuan), which marries one of the most popular Chinese dishes with a classic Italian crust.

People who are planning a special dinner or a party can ask the restaurant to custom-make a special menu for them. "The customer is always right" is the first step of restaurant immortality.

Little Yard Restaurant

Where: 19 Dongming Hutong, Xicheng District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 5166 3328

Cost: About 80 yuan per person



Foie gras and steak in red wine sauce, 88 yuan



Inside Little Yard



Souk Lounge

Photo by Jim Boyce

A new twist on an old favorite

Souk, a restaurant offering Mediterranean and Middle Eastern specialties, relaunched as Souk Lounge last Friday. Among the changes: a new paint job and lighting, an upgraded lounge area, a fairly spacious layout accented by antique furniture and an expanded beer menu in the large front room. But we're glad it still retains the hookah vibe of its former life.

Five years ago, Souk was considered a fairly trendy place, and perhaps these changes will get it back on the bar route.

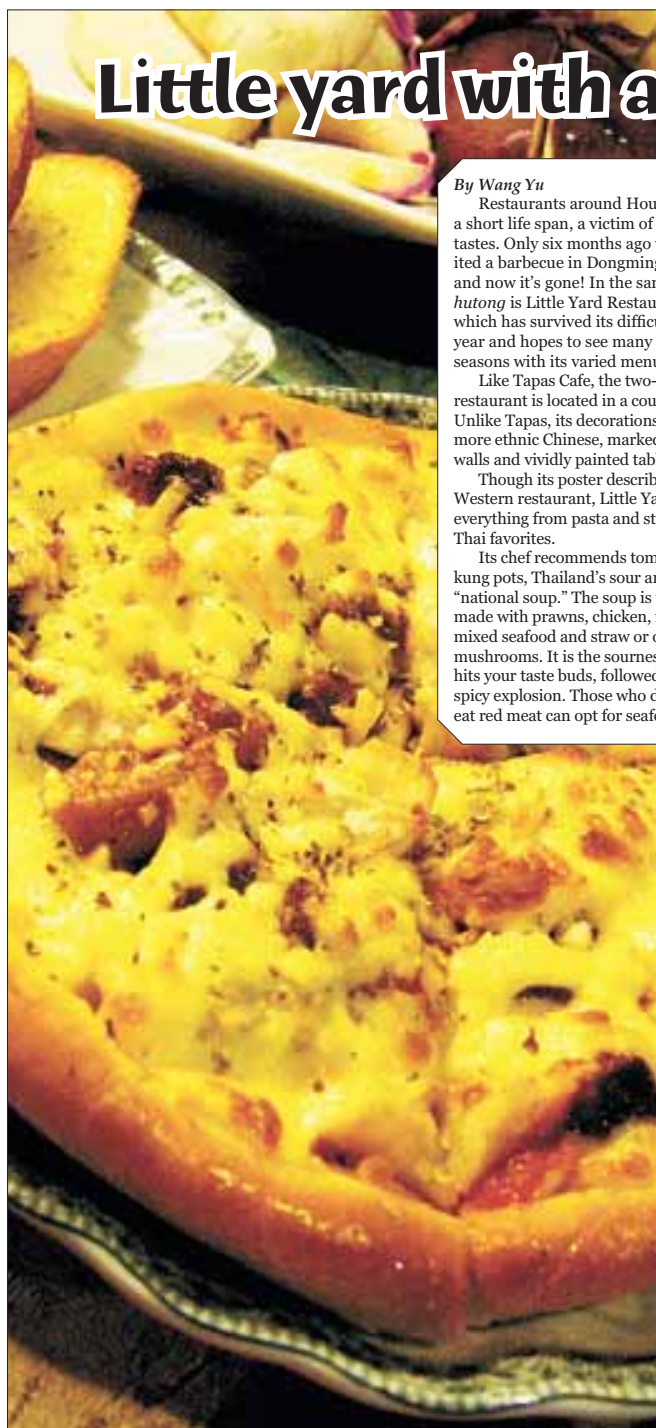
Where: Souk Lounge, Chaoyang Gongyuan Ximen (on the alley behind Annie's), Chaoyang District

Open: 4 pm – late

Tel: 6506 7309

Cost: Starting from 50 yuan

(By Jim Boyce on beijingboyce.com)



Mini pork pizza, 16 yuan

Photos by Elve Liu

Tapas in a cozy courtyard

By Wang Yu

When other hutong restaurants are turning people off with their increasingly commercialized locations, Tapas Cafe reminds diners of the original allure. With the influx of tapas restaurants in town, it is important to distinguish the impressive from the imitative.

Tapas is located in a traditional courtyard home; the owners took one of the rooms, set up a bar and added a dozen tables. The decorations remain faithful to the building's history: antique-style furniture and traditional fixtures. Trees shade the courtyard and shield it from the hustle and bustle outside. The cozy environment encourages diners to take

their time with the food.

The restaurant mainly serves tapas – light snacks or appetizers originating in Spain – but boy, are they good! The Mediterranean garden salad (28 yuan) served with bread and fresh pesto help balance the rich flavors of dishes, like sauteed mushrooms (25 yuan).

The chef recommends grilled baby lamb (38 yuan), a hit among diners. It is served on a bed of a tasty ratatouille. For seafood lovers, he suggests spicy garlic prawns (48 yuan), which comes in a cocotte.

There's also Tapas' original concoction: cheese hotpot with vegetables, fruits and biscuits (138 yuan), an ideal choice in winter. The rose-shaped parma ham and goat's cheese

bruschetta (35 yuan) will satisfy any cheese lover.

And what would a Spanish restaurant be without Spanish wine? Spanish white wines are 45 yuan a glass.

Tapas has impressive service: the waiters are attentive and the dishes are served at just the right pace, giving you enough time to savor each dish without it getting cold. The only shame is that it's too cold to enjoy the food in the courtyard; but that gives us something to look forward to this spring.

Tapas Cafe

Where: 149 Nan Luoguxiang,

Dongcheng District

Open: 24 hours

Tel: 8401 8856

Cost: About 80 yuan per person



Spicy garlic prawns, 48 yuan

Photo by Elve Liu

10 top artists as 20-somethings

By He Jianwei

Contemporary Chinese artists consider their 20s a period to prepare for their masterpiece.

The exhibition *20 x 10: Chinese Contemporary Artists in Their Twenties*, which opened last Wednesday at the Beijing Angle Modern Art, gives a glimpse of what went on in the psyches of some top artists when they were but 20-somethings.

The 10 featured artists are among the country's best in oil painting, print making, installations, photography, conceptual art and performance art. The works, displayed for the first time, show developing techniques and a search for identity: some are reflections of Western masterpieces; others look like unfinished projects or discarded pieces.

One is a sketch portrait of a peasant by Xu Bing, Xu, born in 1955, became famous in the 90s for "Book From the Sky," in which he created 4,000 unintelligible characters and inscribed them on to wooden blocks, then used them as movable type to print books and scrolls. During the Cultural Revolution, Xu was sent to work in the countryside where he found enjoyment by drawing.

"I had nothing to do in the evening but sketch peasants' portraits," he says. "I took photos of my drawing, kept the drawings and sent the photos to the peasants." By the time he left the village, almost every family had a photo of one of his drawings.

Realistic paintings were the rage in China 30 years ago, but Ye Yongqing chose a differ-



Ye Yongqing's *A Poet Takes a Walk* (left) done in 1983 and *Bird and Stone* (2004).

ent path. Ye, born in 1958, is known for his conceptual paintings, most of which contain symbols and forms representing birds. *20 x 10* showcases his oil painting "A Poet Takes a Walk" (1988), which shows influences by Marc Chagall, a Russian-French artist who composed images based on emotional and poetic associations, rather than on pictorial logic.

"Obviously, you can see my imitation of Chagall's work," Ye says. "I was fascinated with modern art and Western culture. The painting reflects my youthful daydreams."

Many of the works tell of their artists' eventual style transformation. Liu Ye's is an example.

Liu, 46, is best known for his colorful cartoons with characters



in playful, naughty adolescent scenes. But back in 1987, he was fascinated with expressionism and did paintings showing classmates with distorted faces.

"The success of this generation of artists has been due to their persistence," Linghu Lei, the exhibit's curator, said. The other exhibiting artists are Sui Jianguo, Zhou Chunyu, Ding Yi, Zhang Enli, Lu Nan, Zhang Hai'er and Rong Rong.

20 x 10: Chinese Contemporary Artists in Their Twenties

Where: Beijing Angle Modern Art, 4/F Building 1, China View, A2 Gongti Donglu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 5, daily, 11 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6561 8327

5 Friday, January 29

Movie

Fleur d'oubli
(Flower of Oblivion)

Where:

Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, North section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 40 yuan, 30 yuan for students

Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

Video Art Touring Festival

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7-9 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9269

Nightlife

If This is Life - Rock Music Back to the 1980s

Where: D-22, 242

Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 10 pm

Admission: 30 yuan, 20 yuan for students

Tel: 6265 3177
Hard Core Invasion

Where: 13 Club, 161 Lanqiying, Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 40 yuan

Tel: 8261 9267

Exhibition



Hutong Play - Huang Kai Solo Show

Where: Amelie Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 15, daily except Monday and Tuesday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9698

6 Saturday, January 30

Movie

L'une chante, l'autre pas (One Sings, the Other Doesn't)

Where: Lady Book Saloon, 69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6270 1928

Obaba

Where: Lele Bar (50 meters east of Communication University of China's north gate), Dingfuzhuang, Chaoyang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6576 5987

Exhibition

Photo Exhibition of Contemporary Artists

Where: Today Art Museum, Building 4, Pingod Community, 32 Baizhiwan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 12,

daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students

Tel: 5876 9804

Spring Dream - Liu Ren Solo Exhibition

Where: Dun Gallery, Building 1, Lakeview Place, Dragon Bay Villa, Yuyuan Lu, Houshayu Town, Shunyi District

When: Until March 21, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8042 2395

Nightlife

Andrew Bird 2010 China/Singapore Tour

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 150 yuan advance purchase, 180 yuan at the door

Tel: 8402 8477

7 Sunday, January 31

Exhibition

Fine Art Prints Joint Exhibition

Where: Ku Gallery, Daku Art

Center, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until March 5, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9202

Traces of Life

Where: La Plantation Art Center, D Area, Art Base One, Hegezhuang Village, Cuigezhuang Township, Chaoyang

District

When: Until February 21, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6433 6920

Nightlife

Passion of the Flame - Red Poppy Ladies' Percussion Concert

Where: Star Live, 3/F Tango, 79 Heping Xi Jie, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm

Admission: 80 yuan advance purchase, 100 yuan at

the door, VIP 160 yuan
Tel: 6425 5677



Peppermoon

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2

Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: January 29, 9 pm

Admission: 100 yuan advance purchase, 150 yuan at the door

Tel: 6404 2711

Movie

Krrish

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 1 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 8229 6153

(By He Jianwei)

Upcoming

Nightlife

Bad Apples and Mama Funker

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: February 4, 9 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 6404 2711

Stage in February

Concert

New Year's Ode to Joy - Song Fei Erhu Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 2, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Lü Siqing Violin Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 26,

7:30 pm

Admission: 80-500 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Dance

Sound of Yunnan

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: February 3-5,

7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

Lar Lubovitch Dance Company China Premiere - Mixed Bill I

Where: Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 3-6,

7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

The Lady of the Camellias Ballet

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: February 3-8,

7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,080 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Irish Tap Dance Riverdance Beijing Tour 2010

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: February 5-11,

7:30 pm

Admission: 180-2,000 yuan

Tel: 6831 6633

Celtic Legends - Irish Tap Dance

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: February 6-8,

7:30 pm

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

Sleeping Beauty, Nutcracker and Swan Lake by the Russian National Ballet Theater

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: February 16-20,

7:30 pm

Admission: 50-1,000 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

(By Jackie Zhang)

Chubby legs, butt keys to better health?

By Li Zhixin

Women usually hate the fat that settles around their waist, thighs and buttocks. Most pine for a slim waist, toned legs and firm hips.

But what's beautiful is not always healthy. A new review of data has found fat on the thighs and buttocks may help keep one healthy.

Big butt a health boon

People with a flabby rear and thighs may live longer because these corpulent buffer zones trap fatty particles and actively secrete helpful compounds, according to a report published last Tuesday.

Many studies have shown that people who accumulate fat around the abdomen and stomach are more likely to die of heart disease than bottom-heavy people, but the reasons remain unclear.

This may be because several different mechanisms are involved, said Konstantinos Manolopoulos of the University of Oxford.

"It is the protective role of lower body, that is, gluteofemoral fat, that is striking," Manolopoulos wrote in the online edition of the *International Journal of Obesity*.

"The protective properties of a lower-

body fat depot have been confirmed in many studies," said Manolopoulos, who reviewed published scientific studies for his report.

Fat on the butt and thighs appears to store excess fatty acids.

Pear-shaped people also appear to have lower levels of compounds called inflammatory cytokines — signaling chemicals involved in the body's response to infection that may play a role in heart disease and diabetes when they are inappropriately active.

Fat on the legs

may also absorb fats from food, keeping them from overwhelming the body when people overeat, he said.

Cholesterol levels reflect a tricky balance between high density lipoprotein, the

HDL or "good" cholesterol that removes harmful fats from the blood, and low-density lipoprotein, the "bad" LDL cholesterol that can harden and block the arteries.

Fat in the thighs may also be more stable, he said, with studies showing abdominal fat breaks down quickly during fasting or stress, releasing potentially harmful components.

"The exact regulatory mechanisms of fatty acid release and storage and their effect on short- and long-term fatty acid metabolism remain to be analyzed," Manolopoulos said.

Understanding all this could lead to better drugs for treating obesity and related diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, he said.

Expanding your backside

The size and shape of your butt is determined by how large your butt muscles are and how much fat is in the area. "Many products, contraptions and exercise programs claim they offer butt beautifying benefits. Some will make your butt grow and others will only shrink your wallet," said Zhou Qinglu, a fitness and nutrition instructor at the Institute of Sport Science.

"If you want to make your butt bigger, you have to increase the size of its muscles: the gluteus maximus, gluteus medius and gluteus minimus. If you are very thin, you may also have to increase the amount of fat on your butt," Zhou said.

Women can start their quest for a bigger, more shapely butt with minimal investment and no health risks.

1. Squats. Squats are as simple as they sound. Stand with your feet slightly farther than shoulder width apart. Keeping your head up and your back straight, bend your knees until your thighs are parallel to the floor. Straighten your legs again. Do three sets of 10 to 15 repetitions with three- to five-minute rest periods in between.

Add weight to build more muscle. "Hold dumbbells in your hands or hold a barbell across your shoulders while doing squats," Zhou said.

2. Lunges. Lunges make the muscles grow much the same way as squats. "When you do lunges, you use your butt muscles in a slightly different way which makes lunges great for mixing up your workout in order to get maximum butt building results," she said.

From a standing position, with both feet facing forward about shoulder width apart, step forward — about a meter, depending on your leg length and fitness level — with one foot. Keeping your upper body perpendicular to the ground, bend your front knee as far as you can, or until your upper leg is parallel to the ground. The heel of your back foot will come off the ground, and your back knee will bend and lower toward the ground. Using the muscles in your forward leg, raise your body and move your forward foot back to standing position. Repeat with the other foot forward. Do three sets of 10 to 15 repetitions with three- to five-minute rest periods in between. Add weight for increased results just as described for squats.

3. Hamstring curls. Your best option is an exercise machine: ask your gym's staff trainer for help selecting the right starting weight for your fitness level and butt-building goal. You can try hamstring curls at home with ankle weights.

"With your ankle weights on, stand facing a solid object, like a bed or the back of a sofa, so that you are directly against the bed or sofa. Using the bed or sofa back to stabilize your upper leg, slowly raise one foot off the ground until your lower leg is parallel to the ground. Slowly lower your leg," she said. Do three sets of 10 to 15 repetitions with three- to five-minute rest periods in between.

4. Kneeling abduction. Begin by kneeling on the ground, assuming an "all fours" position. While keeping your right leg bent, raise it to the side as high as is comfortable. Contract your gluts and then slowly return the weight along the same path back to the start position. After finishing the desired number of repetitions, repeat the process on your left.

Beautifying your butt

The rear end is a very functional part of our body, but it is a tough one to maintain. Women spend a great deal of their time sitting, which deprives their butts of attention.

"We have a tendency to ignore problems we cannot see. But just because we can't see the problem does not mean others can't. Your butt can look really ugly, especially in a bikini or swimsuit if not cared for," Zhou said.

Here are some tips to shape up.

1. Sit on a firm chair. If you spend most of your time sitting, do it on a firm chair. Sitting on a soft surface can make the fleshy part of the butt sag and hinders the development of good muscle control. Even the thinnest person carries enough padding.

2. Don't wear tight clothing. Don't wear tight trousers or underwear: they can make your butt spotty. Tight clothes restrict circulation and causes roughness.

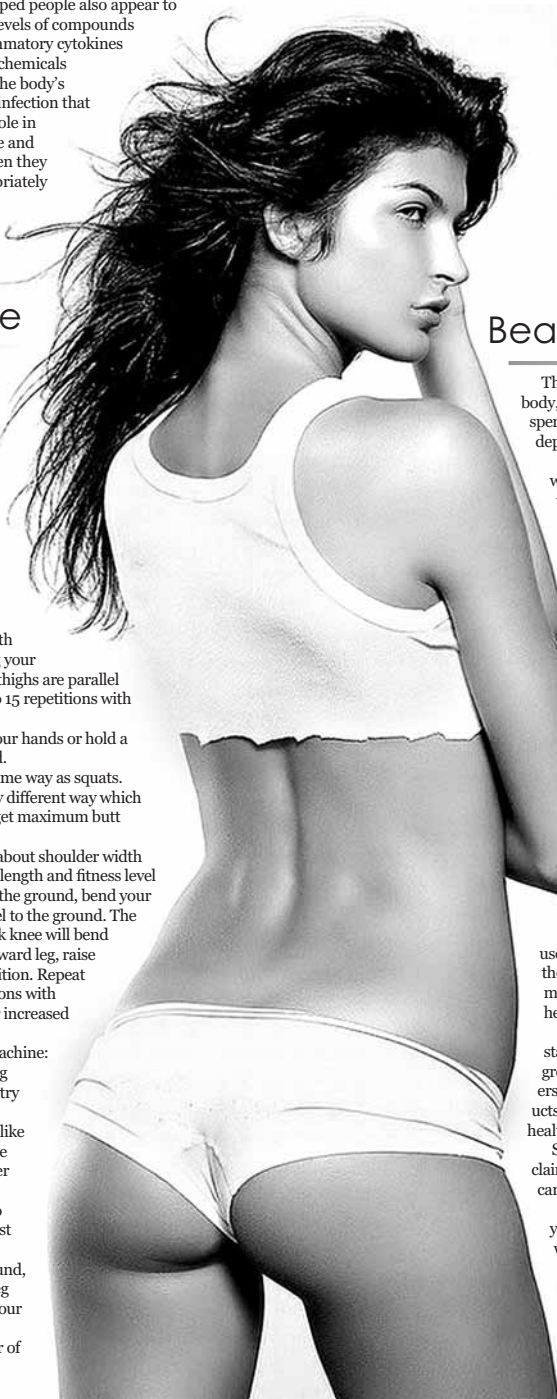
3. Pinch your butt. Pinch your butt when taking a bath to help break down the fatty tissues and promote circulation.

4. Don't use steroids or growth hormones. Some people use steroids or growth hormones to increase the size of their muscles, including their butt muscles. While these drugs work, very serious health problems can arise from their use.

"Some 'natural' supplements contain substances that are chemically equivalent to growth hormones," Zhou said. Many researchers and health professionals believe these products may be associated with serious long-term health problems.

She said to beware of any sales pitches that claim a special machine, supplement or exercise can redistribute the body's fat.

"You can lose or gain fat on your body, but your genetics and hormones alone determine where you'll lose or gain it. There's no such thing as spot reducing or gaining. Also, keep in mind that muscle never turns into fat and fat never turns into muscle. Fat and muscle are separate tissue types that increase or decrease independently of one another," she said.



Nanxincang's 600-year-old story

Museum shows importance of water transportation system in imperial times



The 600-year-old Nanxin Granary reopened as a museum showcasing the country's imperial grain storage and water transportation system. Photos by Jason Wang



By Zhang Dongya

"If we compare The Forbidden City to the heart of Beijing, then the Ming Dynasty's imperial granaries will be the stomach of Beijing," the Nanxin Granary's promotional flier says.

On January 10, Nanxincang, or Nanxin Granary, considered one of the most overlooked historical treasures in the capital, reopened as a museum. It showcases Ming-era grain storerooms and the ancient water transportation system.

Proud history of a royal granary

Nanxin Granary, located on what is now Dongsi Shitiao, was a storehouse for grain meant exclusively for the royal family during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. It was built in 1409 during the reign of the Yongle Emperor (1403-1424), on the foundations of the Yuan Dynasty's (1206-1368) Beitai Granary. This makes it as old as The Forbidden City.

The imperial granaries measured volume in *ao*, which initially meant three storerooms and later five. At its heyday, Nanxin Granary had 76 *ao* – the most in a Qing granary. The structure still has nine *ao*, making it the largest and best-preserved imperial granary in the country.

The granary's vicinity has taken on new life as a "culture street": it has become a base to more than 30 cultural organizations, artist studios, tea houses, shops and restaurants. Some portions of the granary have been converted into warehouses.

Vital water transportation system

Nanxin was one of seven imperial granaries in Ming, all of which were built around Chaoyangmen, now part of Dongcheng District. Nanxin Granary Museum features reconstructions of ancient grain storerooms and the water transportation system, including dioramas that vividly retell its history.

The museum is housed in a single-story ancient building: a black-tile roof, black brick walls and red pillars. Statues of two imperial guards stand

watch at the entrance and guides ready to show people around welcome visitors as they enter.

On one side is a replica of a bridge and rockeries from the gardens of Jiangnan, by the Southern Yangtze River. In ancient times, grain bound for the capital traveled the Jinghang Canal in Hangzhou, then Zhejiang Province, before reaching Beijing's Tongzhou Port.

Water transportation was an important political, economic and social system in ancient China as it was the main way food was distributed – a crucial aspect to maintaining stability, national defense and the ruling status quo.

A section of stone wall in the museum represents a dock in the south. Around it are mannequins, clothed as porters, hauling sacks of grain onto a ship bound for Nanxin Granary.

Also on display are wooden carts and assorted grain containers, such as *poluo*, a shallow basket, and *dou*, which looks like a dipper. The containers hold polished rice, rice still in its husk, corn, cornmeal, wheat, millet and various beans.

Some of the displays were once owned by local families, such as the straw rain capes and hats passed from one generation to the next. There is a windmill-cum-husk-remover that dates back to 1910 and an ancient millstone that still works. Visitors can give it a go to get a feel of the hard work that went into producing food centuries ago.

Continued on page 21...



People had to use a ladder to fill gigantic grain containers.



This windmill-cum-husk-remover that dates back to 1910 still works.



A section of the museum recreates scenes in an ancient dock.



Dolls clothed in spun silk are for sale at Tangren Handicraft Workshop.



An old loom on display at Tangren Handicraft Workshop

... continued from page 20

Scenes from every day life

Near the entrance are two dolls portraying officials distributing grain. One is a member of the imperial court; the other is the grain merchant from the south.

On the wall beside them is a large painting, part of the famous series called *On the River at Qingming Festival* by Zhang Zeduan, created during the Northern Song Dynasty (960- 127). The painting depicts the water transportation system in Bianjing, today's Kaifeng, Henan Province.

On one side are five gigantic grain containers, some as high as three meters. People had to use a ladder to fill them, and retrieved the grain by opening a small sluice gate at the bottom. A figure that looks like a laborer is poised on a ladder, seeming to pour grain into one of the containers.

There is also a diorama of an official collecting taxes in the form of grain and noting it down on his notebook. The imperial court collected grain from ordinary folk to boost supplies for the royal family, court officials and soldiers. Only during famine did the leadership dispense grain to the masses.

Once collected, stocks were inventoried by accountants, shown in one scene using an abacus. The supplies were then moved to the granaries for storage. Nanxin Granary was built with a skylight on its ceiling, meant to regulate humidity and ventilation.

"The imperial granary, which has played an important role in Chinese history and culture, can be a symbol of Beijing, just like the *hutong* and courtyard homes," Li Ang, the museum director said, adding that Nanxin Granary, in particular, should be known by more people.

Traditional handicraft and artwork

Adjacent to the museum is the Tangren Handicraft Workshop, which exhibits and sells traditional handicrafts, such as porcelain, embroidery, sculpture and woven articles. All the porcelain wares, like vases and household accessories, come from Jiangxi Province's Jingdezhen, the country's porcelain capital.

There are also purple-clay teapots from Yixing, Jiangsu Province; silk products from Suzhou and Hangzhou provinces; folk art sculptures from Xiamen, Fujian Province; Zhang Clay Figurines from Tianjin; and snuff bottles with vividly painted pictures. The shop also sells screens and cell phone holders.

It has English-speaking staff who will gladly tell visitors the history behind the art.



Nanxin Granary, the largest and best preserved imperial granary in the country, is surrounded by a culture street with more than 30 shops and studios.



Visitors can find varied art works in the shop, including porcelain, embroidery, sculpture and woven articles.

Photos by Jason Wang



Tangren Handicraft Workshop, adjacent to the museum, exhibits and sells traditional handicrafts.

Nanxincang – Ming-Dynasty Imperial Granary

Where: 22 Dongsi Shitiao, Dongcheng District

Getting there: Take Subway Line 2 to Dongsi Shitiao Station, then take Exit D and walk to Nanxincang

Open: 9 am – 5 pm

Tel: 6409 6467

Admission: Free

Dining

Valentine's Day celebration

Enjoy a candle-lit dinner and savor sweet dishes.

Executive chef Han Gorsler has prepared a Valentine's set menu of tournedos of milk-fed veal and North Atlantic Maine lobster tails, red currant sorbet and heart-shaped strawberry mousse cakes with ice cream.

Where: Silk Road Trattoria Restaurant, The Great Wall Sheraton Hotel Beijing, 10 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 6-10:30 pm

Cost: 398 yuan (plus 15 percent service charge)

Tel: 6590 5566 ext. 2117



Prosperous offerings

Pass on your good wishes to family, friends and clients with our symbolic New Year treats. The Grand Millennium Beijing has two kinds of delicious traditional New Year's cake, Cantonese niangao and malaigao, a treat whose name means "higher and higher, every year," to celebrate the New Year.

Where: Yao Chi, Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Cost: 66 yuan for regular, 96 yuan for large (plus 15 percent service charge)

Tel: 85876888 ext. 3013



Aviation

Singapore Airlines' A380 to Zurich



Starting March 28, Singapore Airlines' customers traveling between Singapore and Zurich will board the world's largest aircraft: the Airbus A380. The super-jumbo craft will make daily commutes between Singapore and Zurich, and will replace the existing 12 weekly flights between the cities currently served by a Boeing 777-300ER.

Make your New Year's getaway on a budget

With Spring Festival just around the corner, now is the time to think about a short international break free of the hustle and bustle of festive formalities. Jetstar Asia/Valuair, a low-fare airline, has some tips on how to plan for a Spring Festival holiday low in cost but high in value. Opt for a short haul to a destination with cultural intimacy. Jetstar.com's "Low fares finder" can identify the lowest fares on each day during the month you wish to travel.

Valentine's Day dinner

Prepare yourself for a romantic Valentine's Day at Marco Polo Parkside, Beijing. Treat your beloved to a splendid buffet dinner at Café Marco for 199 yuan (plus 15 percent service charge). Dinner includes a glass of red wine, free juice, soft drinks, coffee and tea. For a more exclusive evening, try the lavish set menu of lobster salad, grilled Australian Beef and Haagen-Dazs ice cream for 999 yuan per couple. The package includes a bottle of French wine, a rose for the lady and other Valentine's Day door gifts.

Where: Marco Polo Parkside Beijing, 78 Anli Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 5963 6688



Noble Court set menu

Hong Kong Master Chef Lee Hiu Ngai, the latest member of Noble Court's team, has three Chinese New Year set menus to help celebrate Spring Festival in Cantonese style. Among the dishes are the seafood yu sheng platter, braised seasonal vegetables with sliced abalone and sea cucumber, wok-fried scallops with XO sauce and wok-fried shrimp mousse roll with cheese, Sichuan camphor- and tea-smoked duck and the classic dessert chilled sago cream with pomelo, mango and ice cream.

Where: Grand Hyatt Beijing, 1 Dong Chang'an Jie, Dongcheng District
Cost: 688 yuan, 888 yuan, 1,288 yuan per person (plus 15 percent service charge)

Tel: 8518 1234



Build on good fortune

Chef Au has traditional Chinese New Year dishes that will amaze your palate and build good fortune for the year to come. His famous braised oyster and lettuce symbolizes "good fortune" and should bring many blessings. Naturally, the Regent's renowned traditional Beijing Duck remains available daily and is not to be missed.

Where: Regent Beijing Hotel, 99 Jinbao Street, Dongcheng District

When: 11:30 am - 2:30 pm (lunch),

5:30-10:30 pm (dinner)

Tel: 8522 1789

Aria Valentine

Aria, one of the city's most romantic and elegant venues with garden terrace view, is offering an exquisite gourmet set menu prepared by Chef Ruediger Lurz. Toast your love with a glass of champagne on arrival and whisper sweet nothings across a candle-lit table for two. Celebrate Valentine's Day in style with a four-course dinner for two, a glass of champagne and a surprise gift for 999 yuan per couple.

Where: China World Hotel Beijing, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District
Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 36

Hotel

Kerry Centre's new director of sales

Celine Du is the new director of sales and marketing at Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel, Beijing. Celine was previously the director of sales and marketing at Shangri-La hotels in Dalian and Wuhan, and had held a similar position at Shangri-La's Guangzhou regional office. A native Beijinger, Du is fluent in English and Cantonese. Her experience comes from 18 years in the industry and from hospitality studies.

Event

Hilton Beijing Pancake Race 2010

Shape up for Shrove Tuesday and join Hilton Beijing's first annual Pancake Race to have a chance at winning the trophy as the city's finest pancake "tossers." The Hilton Beijing lobby will become a carefully crafted obstacle course contestants must navigate while tossing a freshly made pancake. The winner will receive a trophy and the runners-up will be eligible for other prizes.

Where: Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Changyang District

When: 6-7:30 pm, February 16

Tel: 5865 5120

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

Language adventures during first trip overseas



By Annie Wei

Friends forever have been encouraging me to live overseas so I can "expand my horizons." I've repeatedly told them I can't leave my family and work in Beijing. But last summer I finally got a chance to go overseas when I went to the US to attend the wedding of a friend, Shannon.

As a fourth-generation American-born Chinese, Shannon can barely speak the language: her parents' skills are no better. The day before the big day, the bride, the other bride's maids and I were feeling a bit stressed making last-minute preparations: pressing our dresses, arranging the flowers for the banquet and preparing the guests' souvenirs. Near lunchtime, Shannon said, "Let's chill

for a while."

I thought she was referring to the weather. We were in San Francisco and I actually felt sweat trickling down my back, but I voiced an assent. "Yes, it's kind of cold today."

She smiled and said, "Annie, I don't mean the weather. 'Let's chill' means let's take a break or relax."

"Oh, I see," I said sheepishly. "Why don't we play a few rounds of mahjong?"

After the first round, I said, "OK, let's wash the mahjong tiles now."

Some of the women stared at me in puzzlement. "Why? They're clean," one of them said.

I immediately realized the word I wanted to say was "shuffle." The word in Chinese is *xǐ*, "to wash," so I got

confused. Thank goodness we quickly straightened out that one.

After the game, we decided to check out the pool in the villa where we were staying. Some joked that if we were lucky, we might find some hunky members of the male entourage there.

As I was changing into my bikini, I asked one of the women, "Do you have a condom stick?"

"What!?" she said in surprise.

"I meant the thing to remove the water from your ears after showering or swimming."

"Sweetie, you mean cotton Q tips, right?" She opened her vanity kit and passed me a few cotton swabs.

I didn't realize going overseas would pose so many problems in the communication department.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. Out of the balance

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): The set English phrase is "out of balance" – without the definite article. Its meaning is equal to the phrase "off balance," also without a definite article. For instance, He is out of balance. The canoe went out of balance and capsized. You may say: The table tennis player's tricky loop drives threw his opponent out of balance. You may well say too: The table tennis player's tricky loop drives threw his opponent off balance; or off form. Similar expressions we have include: out of date, out of touch, out of contact.

Native speaker Steven Sander (SS): Definite articles are only used with specific objects. A balance can mean an instrument used for measuring weight, especially the one iconic in justice-related art. It works by comparing one weight against the other to tip the balance. In this sense, one could say "He plucked a stone out of the balance," assuming our specific balance is using stones as its counterweight. Aside from this antiquated example, there is probably no need for a definite article.

2. We could see an improvement in the dollar's exchange value as watching a sudden slump.

ZS: This is a very complicated sentence with "as" used as a pronoun. In order to explain its structure, consider the following examples: Such people as knew Tom admired him. He smokes as expensive a cigarette as he can afford. Now, back to our sample. It actually says: We could see an improvement in the dollar's exchange value as we could watch a sudden slump. From this we come to have: We could see an improvement in the dollar's exchange value as watch a sudden slump. So, it is wrong to use the participle form of the verb "watch."

SS: The professor provides one solution to this sentence's maze of muddled syntax. However, I confess to being positively dumbfounded as to what it means. Even corrected, I think only the writer can ever guess what he or she truly meant.

3. Reds

ZS: When "red" is used as a noun, it usually refers to a pigment or a traffic red light. In addition to the meanings of "radicals" or "North American Indians" for reds, it may well mean "red wine" in colloquial English. If someone says "The Italian wine world is ruled by reds," do not think it is "ruled by radicals." When we say "wine" it is usually in singular form, but when you mean a great variety of red wine, you may well say: reds. Similarly, white wine may be called "whites" colloquially.

SS: I am not well versed in wine lingo, so "reds" is not a word I would usually associate with wine. For me, the word conjures up one of two images: the Cincinnati Reds, a professional baseball team in the US, or McCarthy-era hate speak for "communist." When writing, you should keep in mind that readers may not understand your jargon – even more so when it is not found in the dictionary.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Distorting mirror foods

By Tiffany Tan

In early winter, I discovered the *malatang* place across the road from where I work. In the two months since, I've gotten so addicted to their tofu cubes, crispy sausages and battered chicken pieces that I now go there three to four times a week. It also sells steamed buns, roasted sweet potatoes and cold dishes like Harbin sausages, but I've never ordered anything except my beloved *malatang*.

I had another satisfying meal there last Saturday noon. I was reaching over the counter to pay when I noticed this poster for cold cuts behind the cashier. "Distorting mirror" is a strange name for a food brand – it sounds like something that can land you in a hospital. The original Chinese will surely explain this oddity, I told myself, then went in search of help.

It turns out the Chinese and English versions could be talking about two entirely different matters. The Chinese brand name Pengpengxiang means "very good cooking"; no mention of a mirror anywhere. A Chinese colleague is also puzzled



Photo by Tiffany Tan

where "distorted mirror" could have originated. My gut feeling is that someone in a translation agency accidentally switched the name of a food company with that of a music label.



Sherlock Holmes (2009)

Scene 1

(Watson comes to Holmes, the latter has been in his room for two weeks.)

Dr. Watson (W): Permission to enter the armory.

Sherlock Holmes (H): Granted ... Watson, I'm in the process of inventing a device that suppresses the sound of a gunshot.

W: It's not working. Can I see that? You know it's been three months since your last case.

(Watson throws open the curtains, illuminating the dark room.)

H: Gently, gently, Watson! Be gentle with me!

W: Don't you think it's time you found another one?

H: I can't but agree. My mind rebels at this stagnation. Give me problems, give me work. The sooner the better.

W: Paper. Let's see then. There's a letter here from Mrs. Ramsey of Queen's Park. Her husband's disappeared.

H: He's in Belgium with the scullery maid. Is it November?

W: Yes, Holmes. Lady Rathford reports ... Oh, her emerald bracelet has disappeared.

H: Insurance swindle. Lord Rathford likes fast women and slow ponies. Oh, I see you were the attending physician of Blackwood's hanging.

W: Yes. It was our last case together, and I wanted to see it through to the end.

(Mrs. Hudson, the landlady steps into the room.)

H: There's only one case that intrigues (1) me at present. The curious case of Mrs. Hudson, the absentee landlady. I've been studying her comings and goings. They appear most sinister.

Mrs. Hudson: Tea, Mr. Holmes?

H: Is it poisoned, Nanny?

Mrs. Hudson (M): There's enough of that in you already.

H: Don't touch. Everything is in its proper place. As per usual, Nanny.

M: Oh, he's killed the dog again.

W: What have you done to Gladstone now?

H: I was simply testing a new anesthetic. He doesn't mind.

W: Holmes, as your doctor ... as your friend ... You've been in this room for two weeks. I insist you have to get out.

H: There's nothing of interest for me out there on earth at all.

Scene 2

(Holmes goes to the prison to see Lord Blackwood.)

H: I love what you've done with the place.

Lord Blackwood (B): So glad you could accept my invitation.

H: I just have a small point of concern.

B: How can I help?

H: I'd followed the murders with some interest, and while my heart went out to the families of the victims, I couldn't but notice a criminal mastery in the stroke of your brush (2).

B: You are too kind.

H: However, by comparison, your work in the crypt was more akin to a finger painting.

B: So now you are curious as to whether there's a larger game afoot?

H: Either that, or shortly my friend will pronounce you are dead and I thought I might keep him company.

B: Your mistake is to imagine that anything earthly has led to this moment. Your error of judgment is that you think that I am holding the brush at all. I'm merely the channel.

H: Well, my only wish is that I could've caught you sooner. You see? Five lives might have been spared.

B: Those lives were a necessity. Sacrifice. Five otherwise meaningless creatures called to serve a greater purpose.

H: I wonder if they'd let Watson and me dissect your brain. After you're hanged of course. I'd wager there's some deformity that'd be scientifically significant. Then you too could serve a greater purpose.

B: Holmes, you must widen your gaze (3). I'm concerned you underestimate the gravity of coming events. You and I are bound together on a journey that will twist the very fabric of nature. But beneath your mask of logic I sense a fragility. That worries me. Steel your mind (4), Holmes. I need you.

H: I say you've come a long way down from the House of Lords.

B: I will rise again.

H: Bon voyage.

B: Pay attention. Three more will die and there's nothing you can do to save them. You must accept that this is beyond your control. But by the time you realize that you made all of this possible, it will be the last sane thought in your head.

Movie of the week

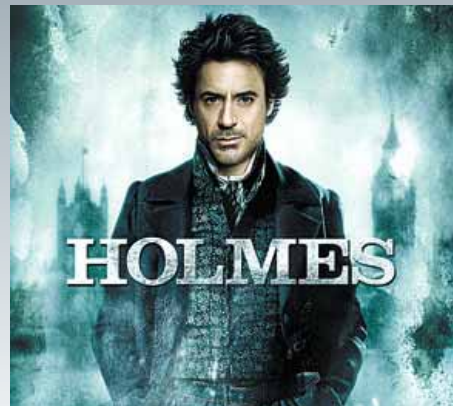
Guy Ritchie is back!

The movie is set in London, like Ritchie's last film *RocknRolla*. But this time, it is the London of the most famous fictional detective starring Robert Downey Jr. and Jude Law, the movie shows a new Holmes like the new James Bond: gritty, hardcore and always ready for a fight. He is intellectually sophisticated and a brawler. Watson, his sidekick and loyal friend, is always there to save his dear partner from harm.

Rachel McAdams shows up as Irene Adler, the only criminal to have ever gotten the best of Holmes. Ritchie's directorial style shines through, from the dark, grimy Victorian London to the violent boxing matches. It is a totally different kind of Holmes story.

Synopsis

After finally catching serial killer and occult "sorcerer" Lord Blackwood, legendary sleuth Sherlock Holmes and his assistant Dr. Watson can close yet another case. But when Blackwood mysteriously returns from the grave and resumes his killings, Holmes must take up the hunt once again. Contending with his partner's new fiancée and the dimwitted head of Scotland Yard, the dauntless detective must unravel the clues that will lead him into a twisted web of murder, deceit and black magic – and the deadly embrace of temptress Irene Adler.



Scene 3

(Holmes and Watson are jailed after making the boat factory a mess.)

W: I've been reviewing my notes on our exploits over the last seven months. Would you like to know my conclusion? I am psychologically disturbed.

H: How so?

W: Why else would I continually be led into situations where you deliberately withhold your plans from me? Why else?

H: You never complained about my methods before.

W: I'm not complaining.

H: You're not? What do you call this?

W: How ... How am I complaining?

I never complain, when do I complain about you practicing the violin at three in the morning. Or your mess, your general

lack of hygiene, or the fact that you steal my clothes.

H: We have a barter system.

W: When do I complain about you setting fire to my rooms?

H: Our rooms.

W: The rooms. When do I ever complain that you experiment on my dog?

H: Our dog! It's our dog.

W: On the ... the dog!

W: But I do take issue (5) with your campaign to sabotage my relationship with Mary.

H: I understand.

W: Do you?



Vocabulary

1. **intrigue:** to arouse interest or curiosity

2. **stroke of your brush:** here it means your skills

3. **widen your gaze:** open your mind

4. **steel your mind:** mentally prepare yourself

5. **take issue:** take it seriously

(By Wang Yu)

